The Adventure for God At Little Portion

Being the Story of the Life and Work
of the Order of the Poor Brethren of St. Francis

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the English sculptor

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ST. FRANCIS PREACHING TO THE BIRDS

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A Sketch of Our History

Monastery and Church at Merrill

The foundation of our Order and that of our Sisters was a slow process. We came into existence as a family of religious communities and not as one community or as isolated communities.

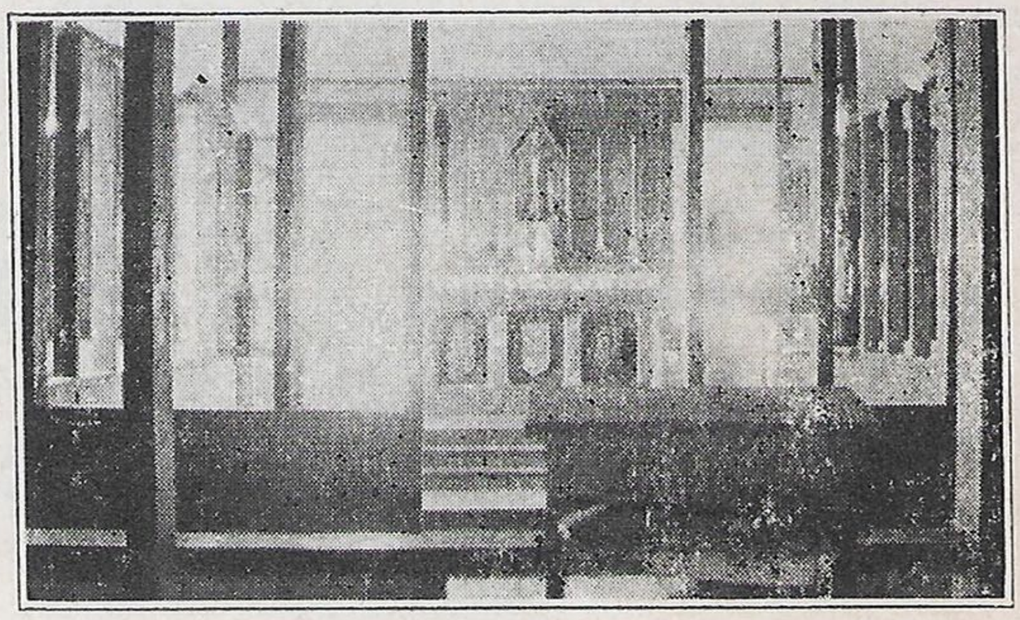
In 1908 a number of widely scattered Churchmen somehow got in touch with each other and began corresponding because of their common interest in St. Francis. Finally a campaign of prayer was agreed upon.

Convent at Merrill

Most of the members of this prayer group expected God to call other people to the Franciscan life. But in 1916 several men and women of the group came to feel certain that God was answering their prayers by calling them and not others to a Franciscan vocation.

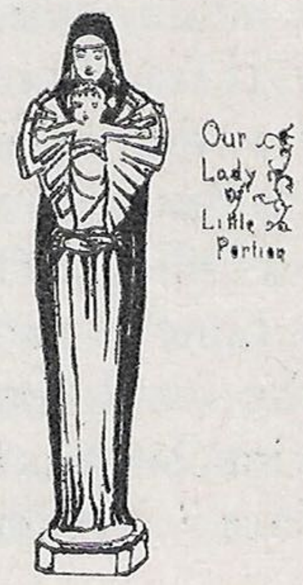
Once more a special resort to prayer was made, and in answer to a "Solemn Novena," which was a percursor of the one still kept yearly by our Congregation, the way was opened in 1917 for three women to start a community life of prayer under the direction of one of the priests of the prayer group. Late in the same year this little group was taken under the tutelage of one of the existing Orders of the American Church, and slowly and painfully there was built up the Order of Poor Brethren of St. Francis, and the Order of Poor Clares of Reparation and Adoration.

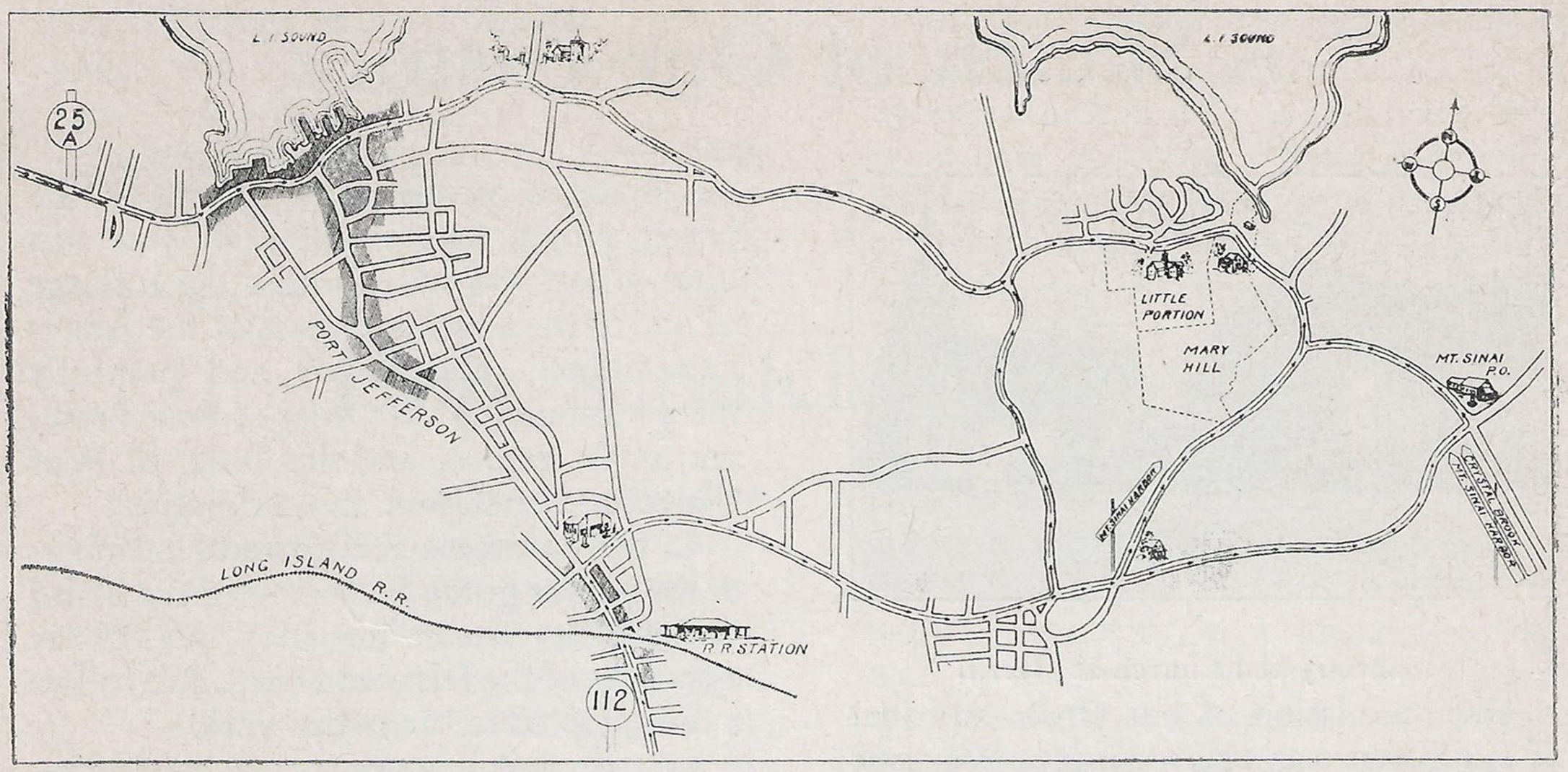
In the meantime about twenty members of the prayer group had accepted the Third Order Rule. These "tertiaries" are the lay associates of the friars and nuns, and follow a rule adapted to life in the world.



Monastery Altar at Merrill

Later, "Little Portion" at Mount Sinai, Long Island, was given to be the home of the friars, and the Sisters acquired, through the help of their friends, the nearby "Maryhill" on which to make their permanent foundation. Although these two communities are separate organizations, they are connected with each other by their Franciscan interests, their parallel foundation and growth, and the spiritual ties which naturally exist as a result, and comprise, along with their tertiaries, what is for convenience known as the American Congregation of Franciscans.





Directions: 25A from Smithtown or 112 from Coram, to Port Jefferson, and follow road marked above with tiny arrows.

Little Portion

On Long Island, near Port Jefferson and across the Sound from Bridgeport, Conn., is the village of Mount Sinai, a scattered hamlet of houses encircling Mount Sinai Harbor. Running back from the water is a series of hills. One of these is Maryhill, on which is the Poor Clare Convent. Another is Little Portion, on which is the mother-house of the Order of Poor Brethren of St. Francis, a community of priests and laymen of the American Episcopal Church.

Once Mount Sinai Harbor was called Old Man's Harbor. Why, we do not know. Doubtless it was meant to denote ripe wisdom, not senility; disciplined strength, not the weakness of age. For the place belongs to sturdy folk with a brave, sea-faring background, and the latter name, Mount Sinai, is accounted for, if tradition be true, by an old-fashioned devotion to Holy Scripture. For it is said that the federal government, in granting a Post Office to Old Man's Harbor, would have none of such a name, and demanded of the would-be postmaster a sensible appellation, such as the neighbouring "Miller's Place," or even "Port Jefferson" which had formerly been "Drowned Meadows." Whereat the Postmaster's spouse breathed a prayer for inspiration, squeezed her eyes shut, ruffled the leaves of her Bible, skewered a page with her needle, and opened her eyes to behold, stuck to its point, the name MOUNT SINAI! Perhaps it was Psalm 68, verse 17: "The Lord is among them as in the holy place of Sinai."

Knowledge of geography is not yet too common. A New Yorker in all seriousness once asked the writer where Long Island is! Quite commonly one hears it pontifically stated that Long Island is flat and uninteresting except for the magnificence imparted to some sections by the vast estates of the rich. First, let us remind you that in spite of a few vast estates, on the whole Long Island is the dwelling place of humble folk, or at least of middle class people.

Look at a map, and you will discover that Long Island is about 150 miles in length, and that much of it averages some twenty miles in width. It is shaped like a fish, and it lies in the ocean in such fashion that the fish's mouth looks as if about to gobble up

Manhattan island, whereas its tail projects out under the southern part of New England as far as Rhode Island.

Its south shore, open to the Atlantic except for a series of long, sandy islands which make calm bays outside of hurricane seasons, is flat. Its north shore, which looks across Long Island Sound to Connecticut, is steep and hilly. The Sound increases in width towards its opening on to the Atlantic, and is a beautiful body of water except during a storm when it can be as treacherous and as choppy as the ocean itself. The whole island abounds in fresh water streams and bays and ponds. Portions of it are covered with scrub oak. Other parts provide you with every conceivable northern landscape. If you wish to irritate a Long Islander, tell him that Long Island is flat.

Once Long Island was the home of Indians, the modern representatives of whom are still dwelling in the Shinnecock Hills at its extreme eastern tip. In early American days a few sturdy white-folk crossed over the Sound from Puritan settlements in Connecticut and founded a hamlet around what is now Mount Sinai Harbor, which in time was full of whaling vessels, coming in from and setting out on their dangerous voyages. These New England folk brought New England ideas with them, and there are exquisite examples of colonial architecture here in their fine old homes and in their fine old Meeting House.

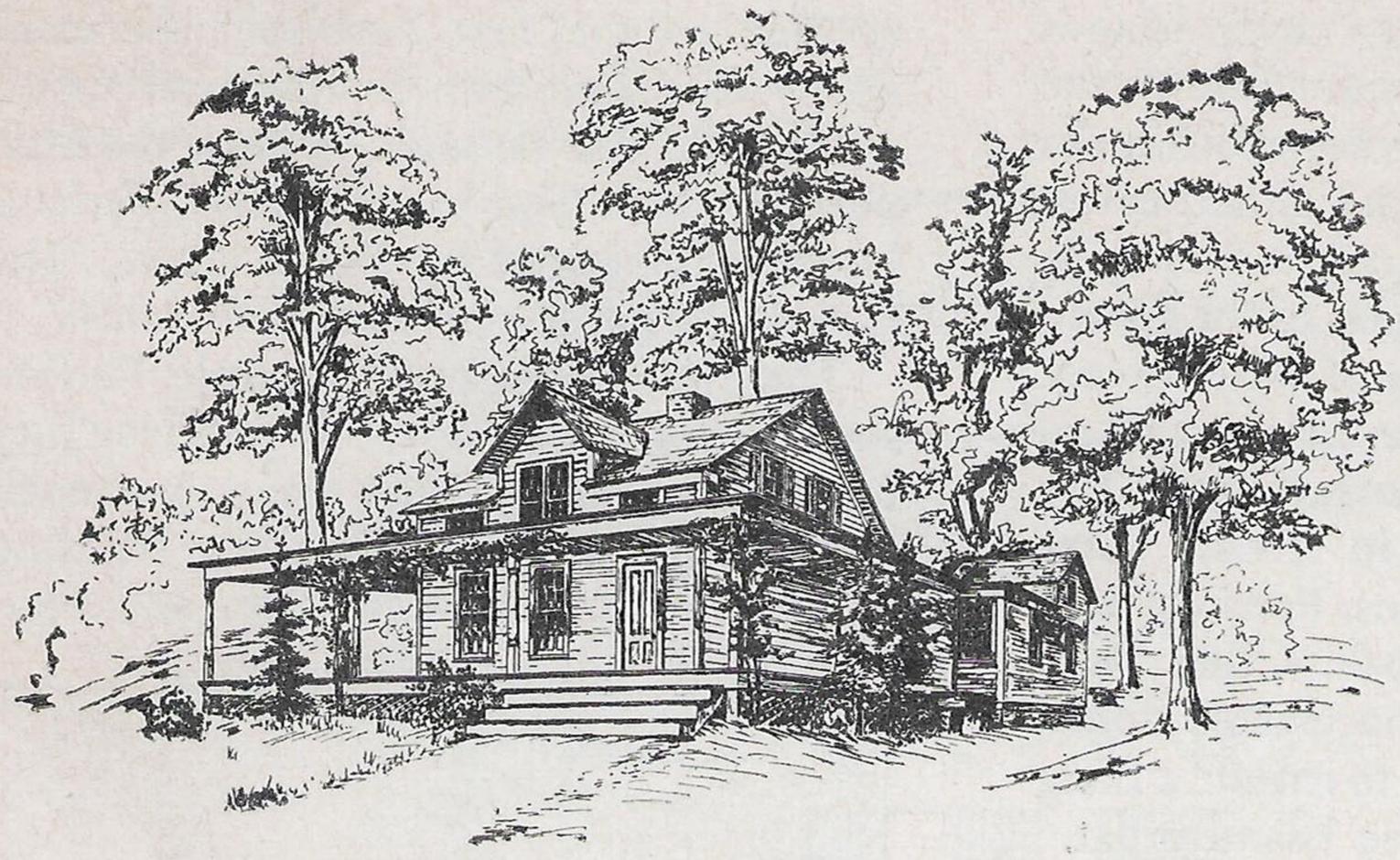
Captain Kidd, pirate of every school boy's dreams, if stories be true, buried some treasure under a great rock on what is now Little Portion. "Happy thought" you exclaim. "Dig for the treasure!" But the story continues that some of the pirates came back years later and got it away! We hope to make this great rock into a reredos for our outdoor chapel, with the inscription "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also," a proper dedication for an altar named after that great freebooter of souls, St. Francis.

Little Portion, a tract of some twenty acres which belonged to a sea captain's family, was given by its latest heir for the use of the Order of St. Francis, then located in northern Wisconsin, a State which is also peopled with pioneer stock, and with the hardy race of lumberjacks not-yet extinct.

The name "Little Portion" is the English form of Portiuncula which St. Francis applied to the first foot-hold on earth which God gave him in Assisi, of which we are told that he said: "This is the little portion which God has given us." Perhaps he was thinking of the Psalm verse: "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance."

The friars have been at Little Portion since June 1, 1928. When they arrived they found available for their use (1) a small farm house, (2) a two-story building which was scarcely more than an unfinished cottage, (3) a barn, (4) a tiny caretaker's cottage, and (5) an acreage, for the most part heavily wooded, except about the buildings where it was thickly overgrown with poison ivy and catbrier. Out of these they set to work to make gardens and a monastery. This booklet will help you to see to what extent they have succeeded. We ask you to imagine the toil, the backaches and the heartaches, which have transformed this wilderness into its present beauty and order.

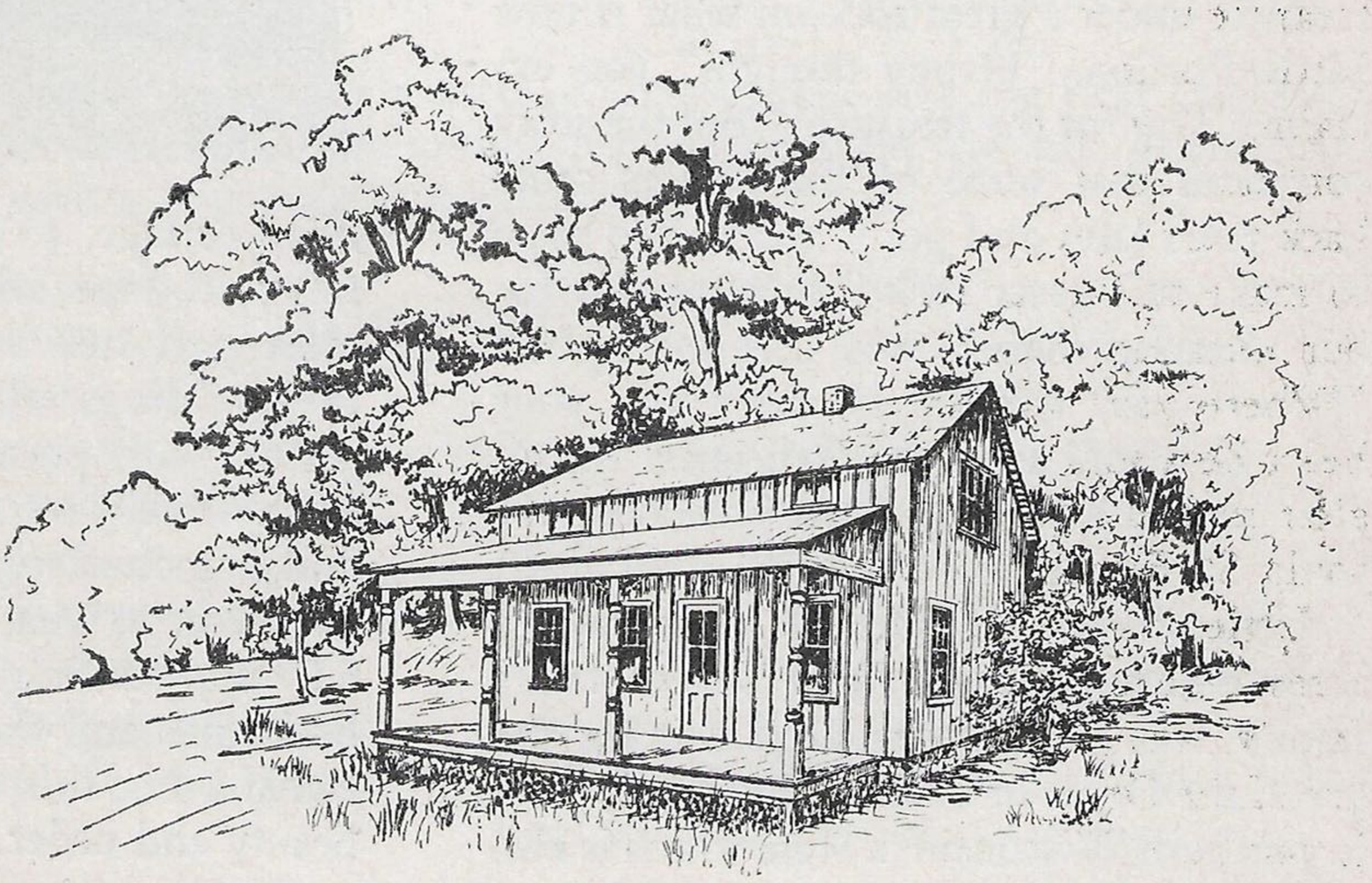
The Evolution of a Monastery



1. *The small farm house referred to in the foregoing article*

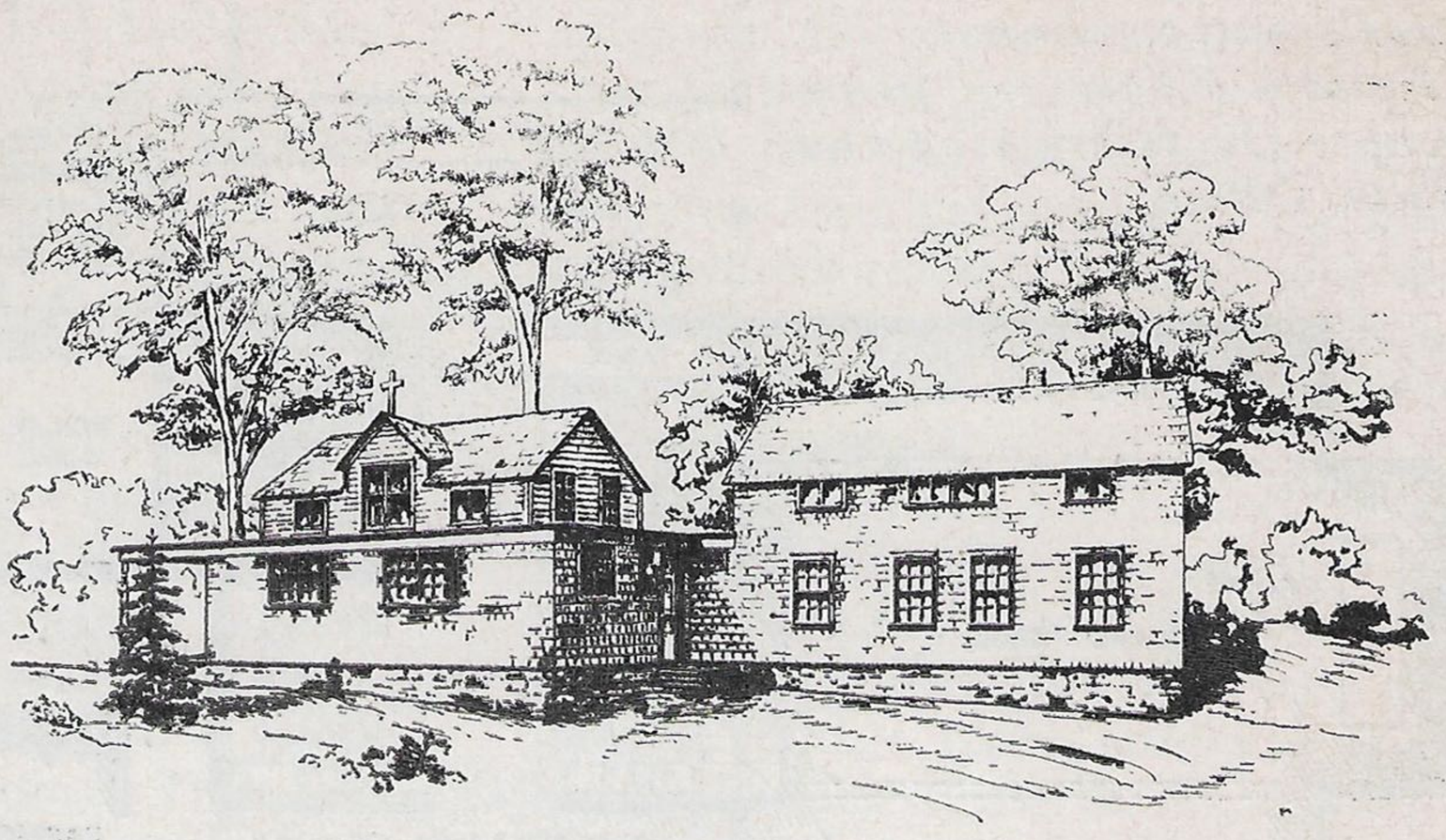
Because the farm house was too small to hold the community the friars, on their arrival at Little Portion, at once enclosed the porch in the fashion shown in the picture on the next page.

The building shown immediately below was moved, after the porch had been torn off, over to the farm house, so that the two could be treated as one building, as shown on the next page.



2. *The two-story building, referred to in the foregoing article as scarcely more than an unfinished cottage*

The Evolution of a Monastery



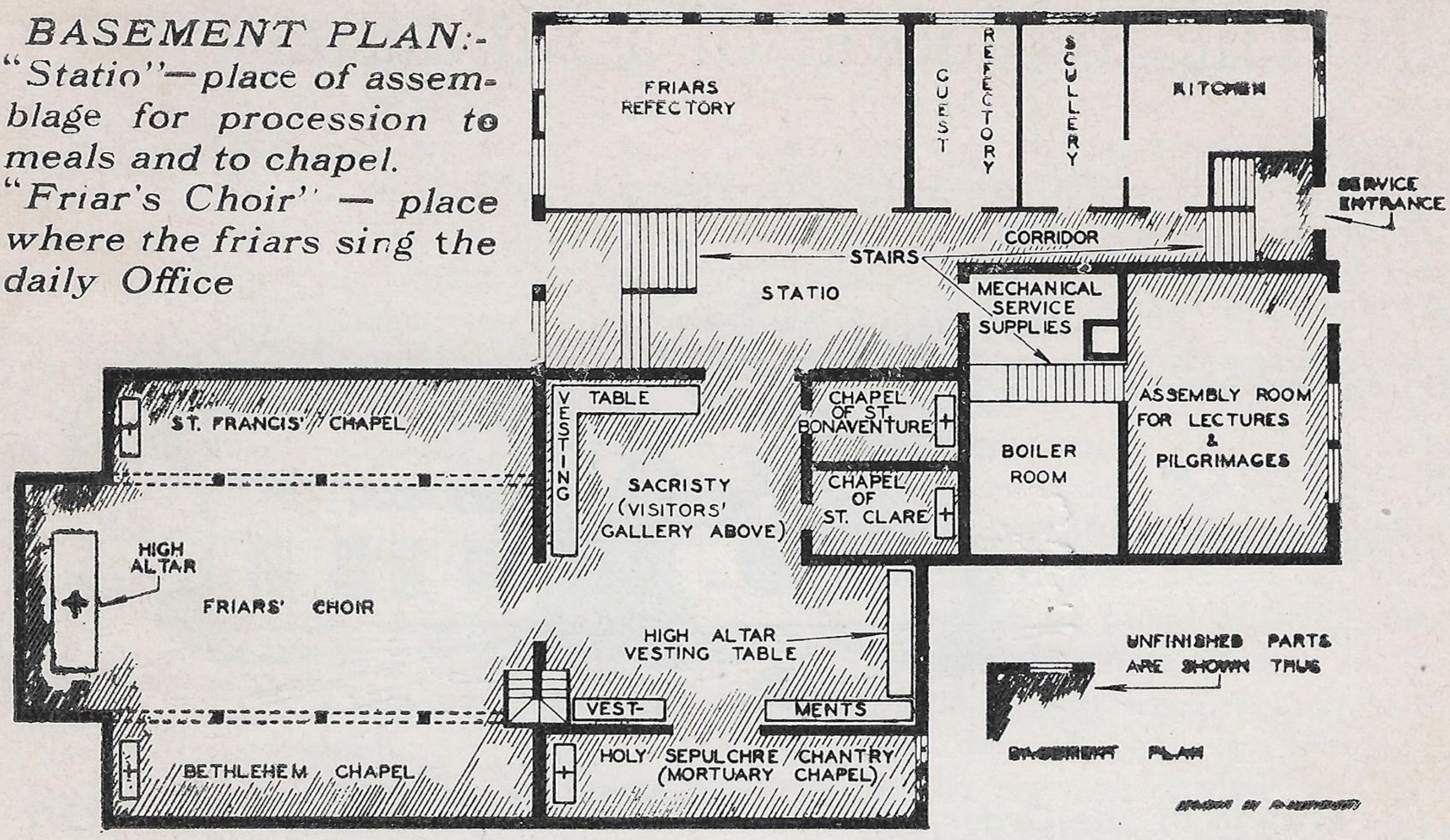
3. At the right is the building first used as a monastery at Little Portion.

The growth of the Order soon made the building shown above entirely too small. From the very first the friars had been trying to carry out a careful plan. By additions to the above building, which entirely concealed the original unit, the charming building shown below was evolved.

Th- caretaker's ccttage, referred to in the foregoing article, re-appears later in the book as the building first used by the Sisters and then re-built into the House of St. Francis and St. Clare.

4. The monastery of our Lady of Little Portion, at Mount Sinai, Long Island, New York.

BASEMENT PLAN:-
"Statio"—place of assemblage for procession to meals and to chapel.
"Friar's Choir" — place where the friars sing the daily Office



When these cuts were first made, the monastery was unfinished. They were published in an effort to get funds to complete the whole building. At the time this booklet is being printed the whole monastery is completed except for the assembly room shown above, which in its unfinished state is temporarily being used as the print shop.

Inside a Monastery

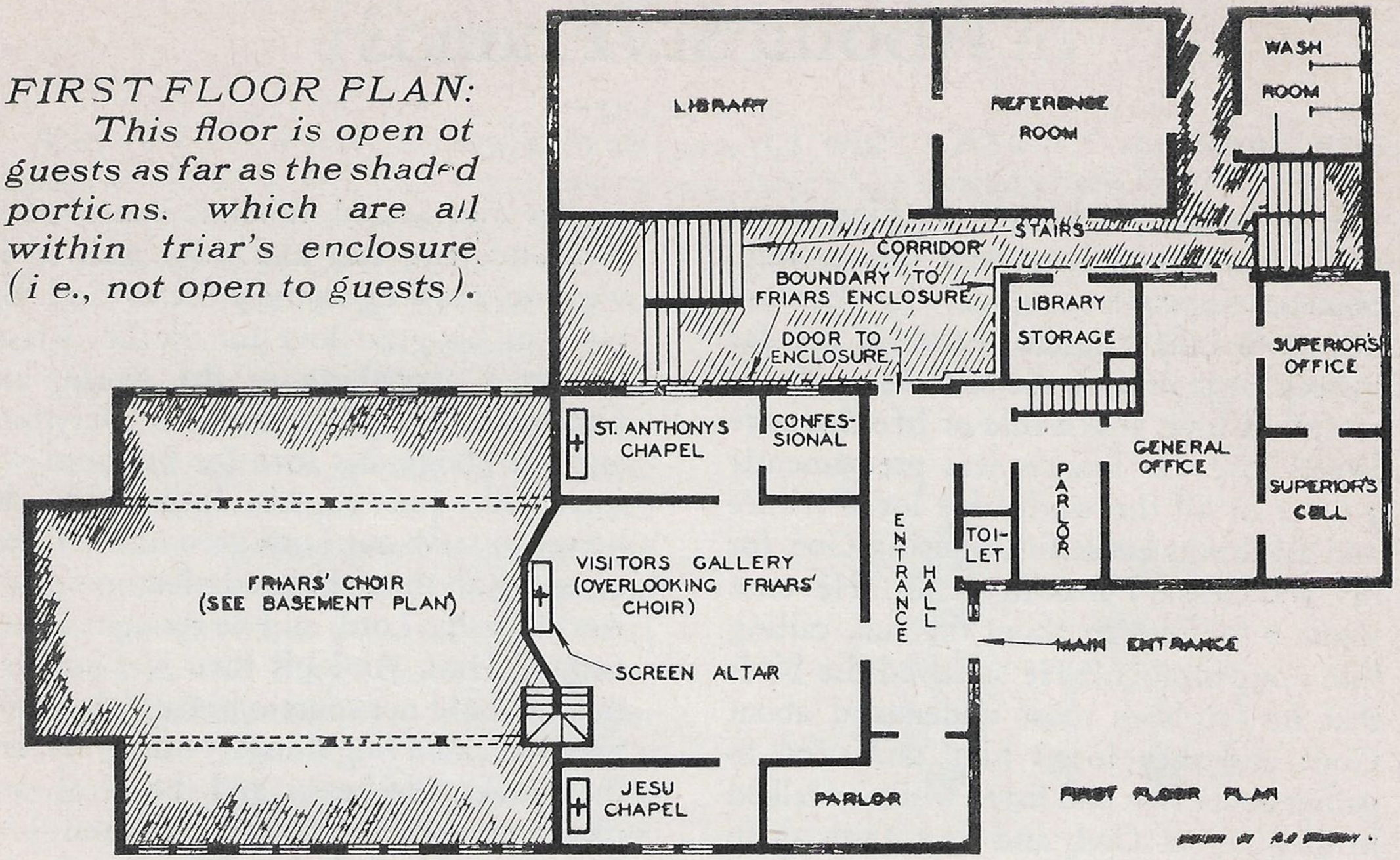
If men are to make a free gift of themselves to the service of God and man, they must have a place of testing and training. That is what is meant by a monastic novitiate. If they are to serve, they must have a house to live in — a monastery.

Herewith are the floor plans of the monastery. Examine them carefully and you will get some idea of what a small monastic building is like. Note the arrangement of the first floor whereby visitors may enter the visitors' gallery of the chapel, the two parlors (places of speaking with strangers) and the general office without entering the friars' enclosure.

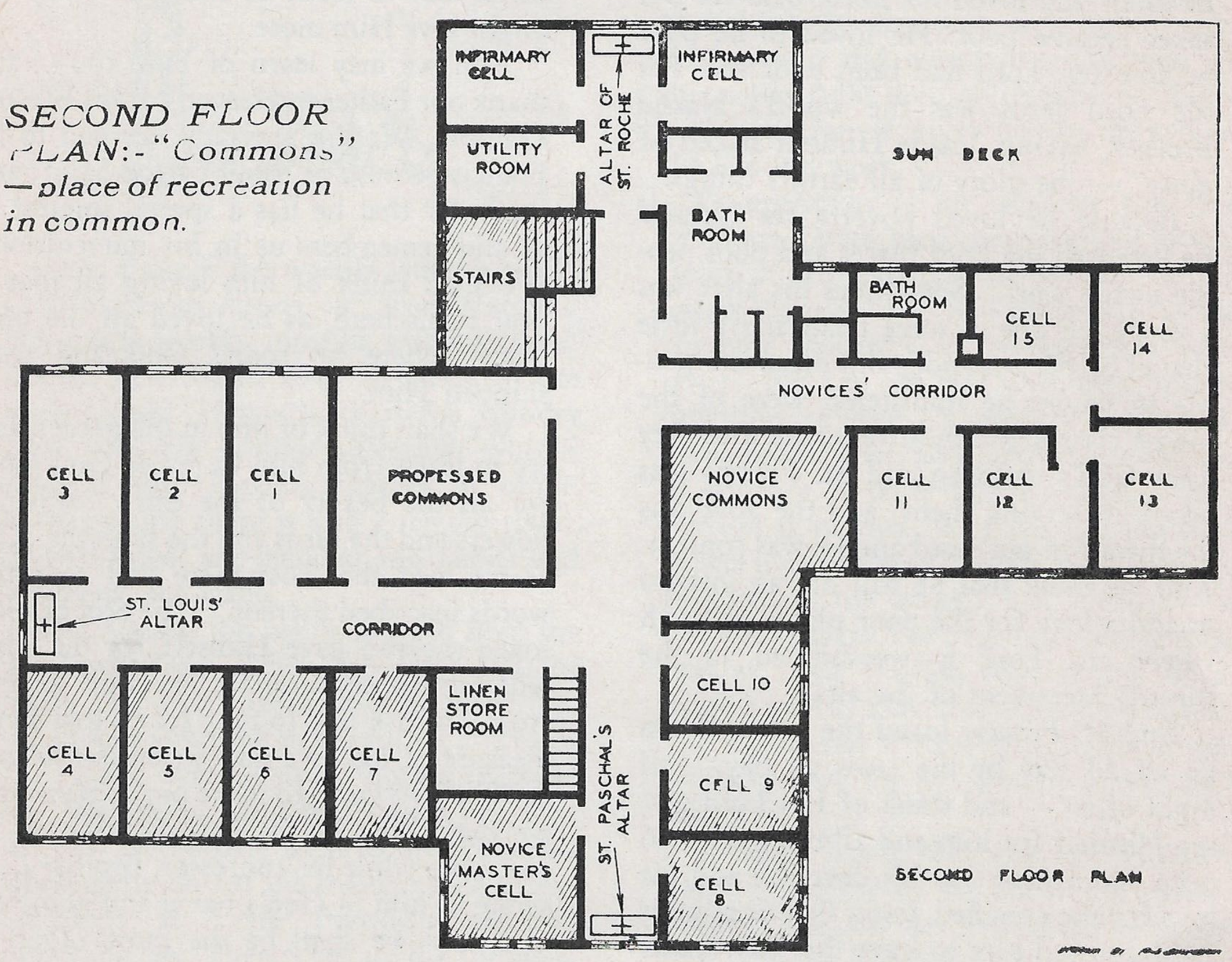
The guest house (not shown on this plan) is separate from the monastery. The first floor plans show a hall between the reference room and the wash room which leads to St. Joseph's Guest House. For meals, guests may enter their refectory through this hall and the service entrance stairs without having to come into the interior of the monastery. If a large number of guests needs to be served, the assembly room can be used.

The second floor provides a wing especially for the novices. Hence they can be provided with a special discipline of training and share their life in common somewhat apart from the rest of the family. The infirmary wing provides a place for the sick and the aged, with a good "sun deck" from which they can watch the work of their brethren in the fields back of the monastery.

FIRST FLOOR PLAN:
This floor is open ot guests as far as the shaded portions. which are all within friar's enclosure (i e., not open to guests).



SECOND FLOOR PLAN:- "Commons" — place of recreation in common.



About St. Francis

BY THE LATE
REV. CHARLES DE GARMO

Everybody who knows anything about Francis of Assisi loves and honors him. Sometimes people wonder why they are drawn to him, but the reason is not far to seek; it is because the saint himself was so full of love. It is a rule of life that love begets love. St. Francis was preeminently a lover of all the world. He loved nature and all things beautiful, praising God for his goodness in making it all. He once wrote a long hymn about the sun, calling him "our brother." He so loved the birds that he felt they must understand about God: and they loved him, and used to gather about him and listen while he talked to them about God, and flew away again only when he bade them go. And he loved poverty; he called her his "Lady Poverty." We think he chose that name because he found that the poorer he became the more he knew and loved his Lord, who for our sakes became poor. He loved to be poor because our Lord had been poor too. For the Lord Jesus was the world's Naked Brother, having "made Himself naked of glory" — the glory of all earthly things.

Because he loved poverty for himself he loved all the poor places and poor people in the world. Sometimes his altar was a very poor one in some unattractive little chapel by the roadside, and often the people to whom he ministered were of the lowest classes and most ignorant. But they were God's children and St. Francis was happy in serving them; and the altar was the throne of our Lord and he was content. And we think that he still has an interest in and a love for the poor places on earth where our Lord is worshipped in the Blessed Sacrament of the altar.

And St. Francis loved the cross. Often he would stay by the cross all day — all night often — and think of His Lord giving Himself for him and all the world. So deep and ardent was his devotion and his love for the crucified Jesus, that finally his Lord allowed him to have the very marks of His own Sacred Wounds impressed in his hands and feet and side. And so he went on, growing in the grace of God. Because of his great love for the Lord Jesus he loved everything in the world, and because of his great love for everything and everybody, his love for his Lord was increased, and as his love grew, his power to serve our Lord grew also. He had given up all the riches and pleasures of the world for his Lord, and he thought always first of Him. And his love was so great that he could not contain himself, but must needs tell all living things — the trees, and the brooks, the beasts and the birds, and men and women and little children — of the great love of God and the joy of serving Him. And because he really loved His Master, he spoke of Him with such burning zeal that all men were compelled to listen and to learn of him how they too might love Him more.

And we may learn of Him too — and thank our Father in Heaven for his life and example. We are specially devoted to St. Francis because he is our patron Saint; and we know that he has a special interest in us and remembers us in his intercessions. We shall think of him loving all that is dear to us here, as he loved all the holy places where he found God and worshipped Him.

We shall think of him in the garden and try to learn from him to praise God more for all the beauty of the earth, with the flowers and the birds and the sunlight. And as we visit the cross there and read the words inscribed thereon, "The Son of God loved me and gave Himself for me," we will remember his great devotion to that cross, and ask him to pray for us that some measure of his love may warm our hearts.

When we come to make our confessions, we may think of St. Francis weeping in penitence while his confessor, Brother Leo, spoke to him in God's name and absolved him, and we shall be the more eager to

make good confessions, remembering that it is sin which prevents or kills the love of God in our souls.

When we kneel before the altar, even though it may be less beautiful than we should like to see it, we shall remember the poor altars at which he worshipped and we shall strive to quicken our love by remembering that our Lord is there, and that is the only thing that matters. And when we go to Mass and see the uplifted Host, we shall know that it is our Lord upraised, and we shall offer Him our love, praying that it may be increased more and more, until we burn with love for Him as did our Saint.

And so by the example of St. Francis, by the help of his intercessions, and by trying to follow him in showing our love, we shall find that love constantly growing, and it will burn, brighter and brighter, in our lives, both in devotion to our Lord and in service to our brethren, who are His brethren too.

In the Interest of Accuracy

Most people find technicalities deadly dull, yet accuracy is seldom possible if technical terms are completely avoided. The intelligent reader is asked to note some words, such as "monk" or "nun," which are in popular use, but which are inaccurate.

To the average American, any man who is a member of a religious community under the three-fold vow of poverty, chastity and obedience is a monk, living the monastic life. As a matter of fact, the words "monastic" and "monk" are not general terms, but particular ones. Thus, every monk is a religious, living the "religious life," but every religious is not a monk, living the monastic life. That is to say, there are different kinds of religious, such as monks, canons regular, friars, clerks regular and members of religious congregations. All these different types are equally to be designated by the word "religious" used as a noun. A person who is not " a religious" is known as "a secular."

Corresponding to the various types of religious life for men there are those for women. Francisan men - religious are friars, not monks, if we are to speak quite accurately, but women Franciscans, if they are Claresses, are quite properly spoken of as nuns. The word "monk" or "nun" implies a life whose chief purpose and work is prayer.

Again, the popular idea is that a convent is necessarily a house of women religious, whereas a monastery is a house of men. Actually, the word "convent" means a place where a group has come together to live the community life, and in olden days was the name commonly applied to a home of Franciscan friars housing a large group, to distinguish it from smaller houses. One great Roman Order of Franciscans is still known as the Friars Conventuals, from their insistence on the need of large groups in each house. Thus a convent may be a religious house for either men or women, although it is commonly used in English only for the latter.

The word "monastery" does not come from the word "monk," but it does indicate a place of austerity and prayer, and once was used to indicate equally either a house of men or of women, although today it is popularly used only of men. A house of Poor Clares was often called a monastery, but a convent of Franciscan friars was never so styled. To call the Friary of Little Portion a monastery is a surrender to modern popular usage, for the word on the whole seems to imply a house of monks or canons regular rather than a house of friars.

The word "precept" is used in theology to designate a known law of God. Thus a precept is an expression of God's will. All men should live according to the precepts of God.

The word "counsel" is used to designate

something which is known or believed to be an advice from God, but which is not a command, that is, it is an expression of God's intelligence rather than of His will.

For each command of God (i.e., precept) there may be many divine indications (i.e., counsels) to an individual as to how the law should be fulfilled. We are commanded to pray. But as to how much and by what method each man is to pray is a different matter. Some feel a divine call to devote all their lives to prayer as their chief work. Such people fulfil the precept of prayer according to a special counsel of prayer.

Our Lord laid down three general counsels of advice as to how to organize our lives in order to make a generous fulfillment of all the precepts. Since these three counsels are recorded in the Gospels they are known as the three Gospel or evangelical general counsels.

Our Lord called all men to the fulfillment of their human potentialities, that is, to develop, to become full-grown, to become, as we may say, real human beings. This is the meaning of "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." The only way to attain this perfection, which consists in constantly developing or growing, is to observe the precepts generously. The three general counsels are therefore known as the three evangelical counsels of perfection, and the religious life is an attempt to organize a complete way of living on the basis of these three counsels, and to make it a permanent way of life for those who embrace it. Therefore they profess vows which make it of moral obligation to persevere permanently in living according to the three evangelical counsels of perfection.

To speak of the religious life as the life of perfection does not mean (a) that only religious may live the life of perfection, or (b) that all religious are perfect, any more than to speak of a college as a learned university means that the members thereof have a corner on learning, much less that all of them are learned. But a learned university is a place where, with proper effort and humility, learning may be acquired by such men as have a fitness for it. Likewise the religious life is the state of perfection in the sense that it is a school of perfection, but anyone, religious or secular, who is properly acquiring perfection is in the state of perfection, for the only state proper to a human being is one of continuous development in fulfillment of God's will.

Anyone who would become a religious is required to demonstrate his fitness for the life in a period of probation, first as an aspirant, then as a postulant, finally as a novice, and even afterwards perhaps for a period under simple vows which, for good reason, may be dispensed as though they had never existed. This fitness is technically known as "vocation."

Each religious community organizes its life and work according to some particular end. Thus there is the active life, in which case the three vows are taken in order to make the members of the community efficient in some sphere of activity, such as nursing, preaching, etc., by means of which they are to serve God and man, and so sanctify themselves in the way of perfection.

Then there is the contemplative life, in which case the vows are taken in order to pray better, learn to know God better, and to contribute something to the prayer life of the Church and the world.

Then there is the mixed life which organizes all the efforts of the religious toward two distinct ends, worship and work.

But note that no contemplative Order exists without activity, nor can an active Order exist without prayer. It is a matter of emphasis rather than of exclusion which has led to these terms.

There has been much fruitless discussion as to which of the three varieties is the best or most perfect. The ordinary answer is that the active is the most useful in a "practical" way, that the contemplative is the most noble in form and the most needed today when prayer is despised and unused, and that the mixed is the one which affords the most opportunities of all round work and development. But none of the answers is satisfactory. It is like comparing a hospital, an airliner and a university. None of the three could exist except for earth, fire

and water. All of them have to do with human beings and their needs and aspirations. Thus they have much in common. But why try to decide which is best, or noblest, etc. Air travel may some day very well make all the world one in a common humanity where all share in the blessings of each, and so greatly multiply the usefulness of hospitals and universities. But to some, airliners are still terrifying things, like the contemplative religious Orders. In a word, they are a bit too modern for those who are still living in the back woods of conventional thought and prejudice. They savor too much of the ancient fable of Icarus. Thus often do the ideas of antiquity suddenly emerge far ahead of us again, and it is slow work catching up with the ancients.

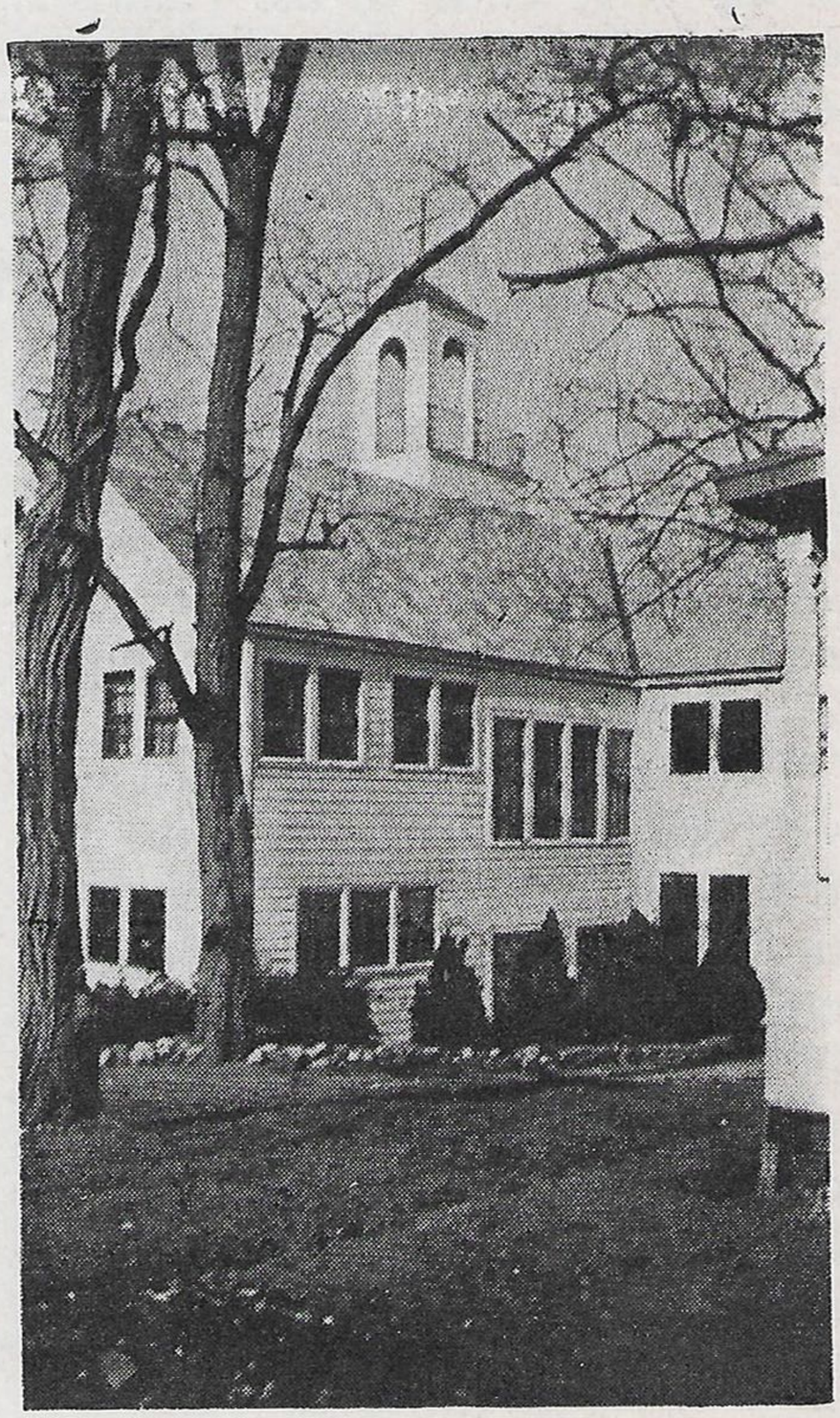
Each religious community is either enclosed (sometimes called cloistered) or unenclosed. The contemplative Orders are often enclosed, but very active Orders, as well as those which profess the mixed life, have found enclosure necessary under some conditions. Hence the fact that a community is enclosed, does not of itself mean that it is purely contemplative.

"Enclosure" is another much-misunderstood word. The form of enclosure varies according to the needs and purposes of the community. But there never was, or is likely to be, an enclosed Order which is shut up within the four walls of a building. Most enclosed religious do not live as narrow or as circumscribed a life as the average villager in the United States. Whether a person lives permanently at one spot on the earth's surface, or whether he covers much mileage over the earth's surface, he still can live in the very heart of God and humanity, in direct relation to all the universe. By and large the enclosed contemplative religious is more likely to do this than anyone else on earth. Gadding about does not of itself make people wise, holy or useful. Often it makes them superficial. Certainly such a life is not conducive to prayer. Those who would really learn the art of prayer need to dwell in God.

The nuns who belong to the Order of Poor Clares of Reparation and Adoration at Maryhill, near Little Portion, are enclosed contemplatives. Those of us who know them envy them the breadth and richness of their lives.

The friars at Little Portion follow the mixed life and are of course unenclosed. The associates of these two Orders, called tertiaries, even if they are not technically religious, of course exemplify the active life.

Many objections have been urged against the technical terms of the religious life. Our point is not that the best possible terminology has been devised, but only that these are the technical usages, and there are no others available for use. The word "automobile" has been condemned as a horrible example of how words should not be formed since it is half Greek and half Latin, but no one makes any effort to introduce "ipsomobile" or other suggested improvements. The trouble with language is that we are stuck with it. The best thing to do is to try to understand and use it as it is. An effort has been made in this booklet to avoid technicalities, but with the best will in the world, some of the unfamiliar terms above had to be used.



Vocation to the Religious Life

Please read the article above, *In the Interest of Accuracy,* before you read this one.

The monastic life was instituted by our blessed Lord Himself. A rich young ruler once came to Him and said: "Good Master, what must I do to be saved?"

To this our Lord replied: "You know the precepts of God. Keep them and you will be saved."

"But," answered the young man, "all these have I kept from my youth up."

"Oh, if you would be perfect — if you are seeking a special opportunity of being generous with God and of doing something more than merely to obey the precepts — if you seek to fulfill the precepts by living according to the counsels of perfection — go sell all you have, and so become poor, and then come and follow Me, without hope of wife or family, and in complete obedience."

Here we have our Lord's own authority for the three "evangelical counsels of perfection" of poverty, chastity and obedience, to which every religious is bound and of which the three knots in the Franciscan waist-cord is symbolical. Poverty renounces all creation outside of self that one may possess God alone. Chastity renounces not only the gratification of the flesh but also legitimate family love and family ties so that one may love God alone. And obedience renounces the inner citadel of the soul, the will, that one may cling to God alone.

In these principles, especially in that particular form in which the Franciscan professes them, the novice is trained. To our Order poverty is all embracing because it is the method of our Lord's own mission. He came to save the world by His poverty. The Order that would share His vocation and mission must have the same kind of poverty.

A "monk" or a "nun," or to speak with greater technical accuracy, a "religious," is one who has vowed poverty, chastity and obedience in a community which exists for the purpose of carrying out these vows. The motive for such vows is love — a desire to do something for God which He does not require under pain of sin but which He has called or invited the person to do as an act of generous love and which, having invited the person to do, He Himself will give grace to do to the very end.

Are the Unwary Trapped?

Many people have the romantic and exciting idea that monasteries and convents are dank, dark places like prisons, where the unwary are trapped and held, languishing and broken-hearted, under lock and key to the very end of their days. This is the great Protestant fairy tale with which many console themselves for the lack of the marvelous which they have lost by their rejection of Catholic myth, legend and poetry. The ordinary Protestant myth about monks and nuns is a gorgeously blood-curdling one, quite worthy of Poe's weird tales, but unfortunately for romance it is a fiction which is so contrary to fact that it must be placed in the same category as Mother Goose stories.

No one is more anxious to keep the unfit and the unhappy out of monasteries and convents than the professed religious who live therein. Think of the trial of living all your life with a weepy nun or a grouchy friar! If there are bolts and bars it is to keep people out, not to keep anyone in.

All religious reverence their own state of life too highly to permit anyone to profess the three vows without many tests and examinations and a long period of training. Our life rests on the idea of divine vocation. Those who are so fortunate as to have a vocation are constrained by the love of God to live the life. They are forced to live it by a power within themselves, not by any power outside themselves. Usually

much influence, sometimes force, has been exerted on them by their families and worldly friends to prevent them from entering religion. They have entered religion in spite of much opposition and anguish of heart. How much better the world would be if this divine vocation were reverenced and sought after! Why do you prefer your child to undertake the hazards of business or family life in preference to that of a life dedicated in a special way to God? Why is your life as a secular any happier or safer than that of a religious?

The world needs men and women who are completely detached from ordinary ties and duties so that they can give all their time and effort to his service. What would the Episcopal Church be like if she had even 10,000 men and women vowed to poverty to be put anywhere at home or abroad to do Church work? Imagine the attack which she could make on the forces of evil. Surely God must be asking, pleading, calling many every day. But they do not hear for they do not listen. That is what our Lord meant when he said: "Many are called but few are chosen."

He calls whom He will.
He fits those who respond.
He chooses those whom He fits.

How to Find a Vocation

The first step necessary to find a vocation is to be willing to have one. Vocation to holy religion is the greatest gift on earth that God bestows except the one other gift of a vocation to the priesthood. It certainly cannot be given to those who do not want it.

A vocation consists of two things, desire and fitness. Anyone who has the desire or impulse to be a religious is under a moral obligation to go to a community to test this desire and see by practical experience whether or not he has the fitness. No one on the outside looking in can possibly know what the religious life is. It cannot be imagined. It must be lived.

Of course, it goes without saying that no one has a right to go into religion who is bound elsewhere by God-given claims, such as engagements of debt or marriage. And no one has the fitness for this life who, when trying to live it, cannot find interior peace and spiritual well-being therein. The old Franciscan saying is that the three signs of vocation are:

1. To eat well;
2. To sleep well;
3. To laugh often.

In other words, if on beginning to live this life it is found to produce normal physical well-being, even while a great spiritual surrender is being fought out, the fact of vocation seems evident. If on the other hand the aspirant becomes increasingly moody or unhappy, a monastery is no place for him, and he is frankly told that God has not called him.

To enter our Order the normal procedure is this. First, the aspirant gets permission to come on a visit, perhaps several visits. Thus he gets some idea of what the life is like, and the superiors get some idea of whether he gives evidence of fitness. Evidence of a real attraction to obedience, prayer and self-surrender, is a reason for admitting the aspirant as a "postulant." During the postulancy he leads the full life of the Order so that he can judge for himself whether this life is meant for him. The postulancy lasts as long as the superiors desire, normally nine months or more, and can of course be terminated at the will of either party.

The next step is the novitiate. The aspirant is supposed to have faced the question "Have I a vocation?" and the postulant "Have I a vocation to this Order?" Both questions having been answered, "Yes, so far as I can tell," the postulant enters the novitiate, during which time the authorities of the community test and train the novice, so that a final decision as to fitness can be reached. It might be said that during the postulancy, the Order is being tried out by the postulant, but during the novitiate the novice is being tried out by the Order. Our

novitiate lasts as long over one year as the superior desires in each case, although like the postulancy, it can be terminated at will.

Let us count the average periods — three months visit, nine months postulancy, eighteen months novitiate — in all two years and six months before he gets through the novitiate. Then comes at least three years under simple vows before solemn vows can be taken. This makes a total of over five years waiting and testing.

It is wearisome to recount all these details of steps taken before one is irrevocably committed to the life. But everywhere one finds people who are convinced that the innocent and ignorant are somehow betrayed into the monastic life, just as flies get stuck on fly-paper, and then cannot get away from it. Compare all this with marriage. Think how much more secure and trustworthy is the process through which a young man or a young woman prepares for and tests vocation to religion than is the case with marriage.

Requirements for Admission

1. Freedom from engagements of debt or marriage.
2. Evidence of baptism and confirmation.
3. Testimonial from one's parish priest.
4. A physician's certificate of good health (including examination of one's teeth) and sound mind.
5. An effective desire to give up everything for Christ's sake.

What Do You Do?

This is the question frequently asked of religious. Apparently the expected answer is: "We wear a picturesque habit, look pious and twiddle our thumbs, meanwhile being bored to death for something worth while to do." Whereas the answer is, Religious work hard, and pray hard. At Little Portion we are hard at it from 5:40 each morning until almost 10:00 each night.

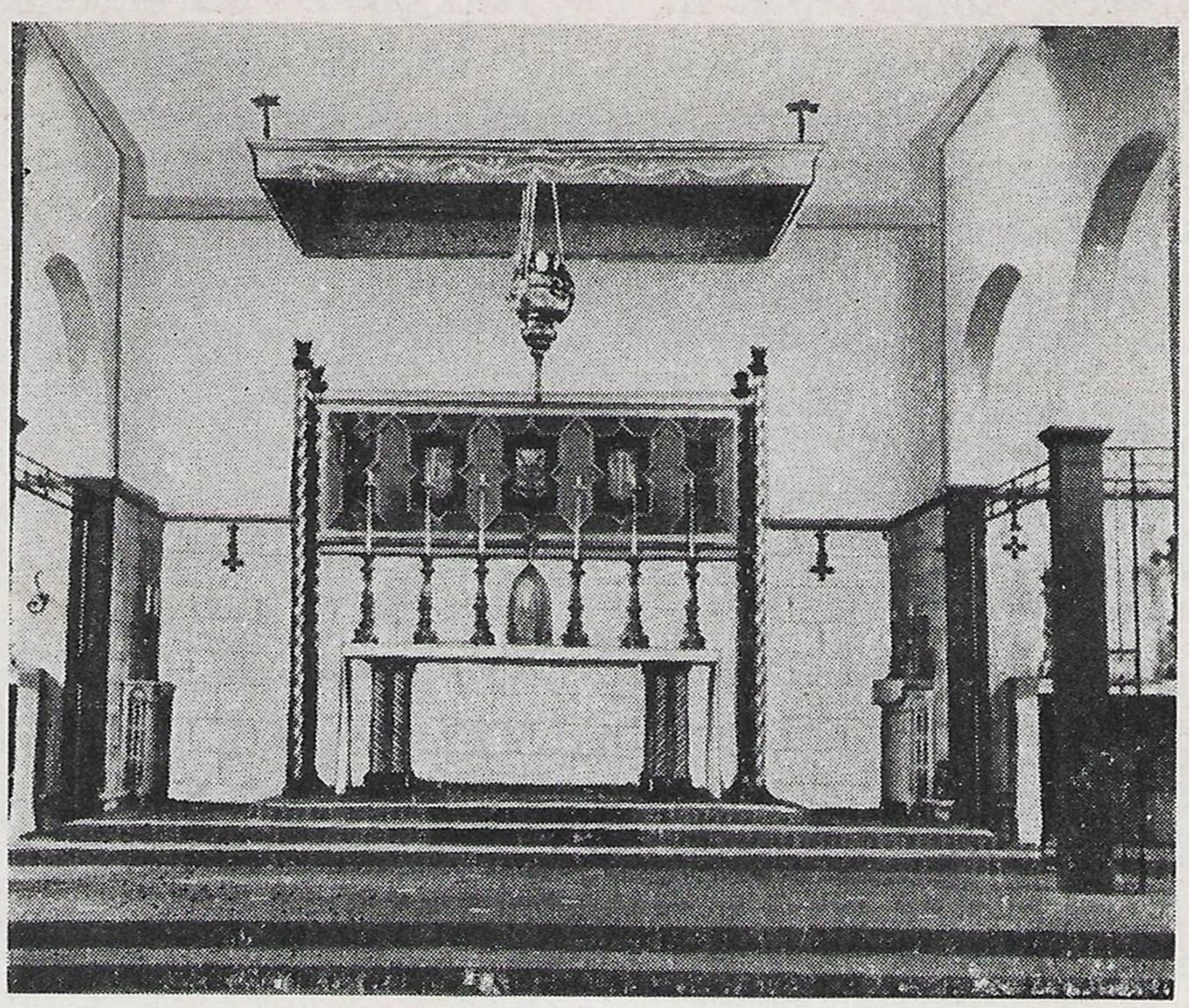
We must do housekeeping, farming, building, printing, etc., in addition to traveling far and wide on our preaching missions, meanwhile also working at prayer according to the rule of daily Mass, meditation, and recitation of the Divine Office. The latter consists of eight daily services (this in addition to the daily Mass and daily meditation periods). Figure this out and see if it is not a man-sized job.

In the course of a year our friars often travel from coast to coast preaching the Gospel, giving missions, holding retreats, and the like. Little Portion provides opportunities for instruction and spiritual rehabilitation to those who come — a constant succession of men and women — seeking it. Our vocation is a missionary one, to save souls. We try to have men trained and ready to come to the assistance of the parish clergy whenever they need help or reinforcement. In time we hope that God may even consider us worthy to enter the foreign mission field.

Week Day Time Table

5:40 a.m.—House called.
6:00 a.m.—Prime and Terce, followed by the Masses of individual priests.
7:00 a.m.—Conventual Mass. Breakfast, Tidying cells.
8:15 a.m.—Daily Chapter. Mental Prayer for a half hour.
9:30 a.m. to 12—Morning silence and work period.
12:00 noon.—Sext and None. Bible reading.
12:30 p.m.—Dinner.
1:30 to 2:30 p.m.—Silence and leisure.
2:30 p.m.—Particular Examen. Vespers and Compline. Afternoon Conference on work.
3:00 to 5:00 p.m.—Afternoon work period.
5:00 p.m.—Matins and Lauds. Mental Prayer or spiritual reading for a half hour.
6:15 p.m.—Supper.
6:45 p.m.—Recreation.
7:30 to 8:30 p.m.—Evening work period.
9:00 p.m.—General Examen. Community Intercessions. Night Prayers. Silence till after Breakfast next day.
10:00 p.m.—Lights out.

The Chapel as a Workshop



The Monastery High Altar is a Holy Table as in ancient times.

Do you believe in prayer? If so, in what sense? Is prayer anything more than relief to the human emotions? Is it worth doing for its own sake? Or is prayer only worth while when you can get something out of God? Do you believe that through prayer God teaches us His will, and works out His will in us? Do you realize that Christian activity is the result of surrender to God's will and way, and therefore that such activity is the fruit of Christian worship which is nothing else than a deliberate and conscious rejoicing in God and His will? Do you therefore accept prayer as a matter of supreme importance? If so, then comes the question, How much do you pray? For example, how much time or effort have you spent in prayer today?

Religious become weary of explaining why the Rule demands that we put prayer first in our life, and spend so much time in prayer. If you honestly and truly believe that prayer is worth while, then there ought to be no question as to why religious give much of their time to it.

But there is one point about the prayer life of the religious which needs explanation. Religious are trying to do something which is hard on human nature — they are trying to fulfill vows of poverty, chastity and obedience — and therefore religious need more grace and help from God than people who have not taken those vows. They must make their confessions and communions more frequently and spend more time at worship and in meditation than is necessary for people not bound to live according to the rules of sacrifice which the religious life entails. Therefore, in any religious house anywhere in the world the chapel is the centre of all life and work. It is the workshop where is wrought out that devotion for God's will which alone makes the life and work of the religious possible. If you have any sympathy for the religious life, you must never belittle to a religious the supreme importance of prayer, for according to his diligence in prayer, he succeeds or fails as a religious. To encourage him in carelessness concerning prayer is to encourage him in treason against his vows.

Many people do not realize that there are several different forms or varieties of prayer. There is, of course, in an ascending scale, confession, intercession, thanksgiving, adoration. The latter two are little practiced by people today, the last almost not at

all.

These four different kinds of prayer may take the form of private and personal prayer to God, and such prayer may consist in repeating prayers which have been learned by heart or which can be read out of a book. This is vocal prayer. These four varieties of prayer may also take the form of meditation or mental prayer, that is, free prayer, thinking and speaking in union with God in whatever way the individual finds useful. The religious of course practices private and personal prayer in both the vocal and the mental form.

In addition to this, there is liturgical prayer, in which a group of God's children, conscious of their union with God, approach God as a family, in the name of and on behalf of the Church which is the whole family of God on earth. The noblest form of liturgical prayer is to be found in the Eucharist or the Mass, in which the family of God celebrates the redemption which Jesus Christ has accomplished. In the Mass Jesus Himself becomes present as our Redeemer, and makes His redemption available by giving Himself to us in the Holy Communion. The Mass is a drama which celebrates and represents redemption by making it present and available to us. The life of Little Portion centres in the daily Mass, and each priest-friar attempts to offer the Holy Sacrifice daily. Hence there are many altars at Little Portion, and one of the happiest tasks anyone can be assigned is the sacristy work whereby the various chapels and altars are cared for, and preparations are made beforehand for each priest's daily celebration of the Holy Eucharist.

In addition to the liturgy of the Mass, there is also the liturgy of the Divine Office. Our Lord's Prayer Book was the Psalter, and at Little Portion all of the 150 Psalms are recited each week. The Divine Office is almost entirely composed of the Psalms and the other Scriptures. In the time table above you have read the names of the eight daily services of the Divine Office—Matins, Lauds, Prime, Terce, Sext, None, Vespers, and Compline — whereby the Psalter is read and the Scriptures are studied in prayer.

If you examine the schedule carefully, you will see provisions for the other kinds of prayer also. But the Franciscan Order does more than encourage the individual to pray by himself. As an Order it undertakes to keep up, in the name of humanity, the daily celebration of the liturgy which is the prayer of the Church. It is the aim of Little Portion to do this as simply as possible, but also to do it with great care and reverence, in accordance with the prescribed customs. There is small place for individualism in liturgy. The liturgical spirit demands surrender to the Church's methods, ideals, and ideas. Through the liturgy the Church of God is able to form the mind of Jesus Christ in those persons who practice liturgical prayer in its fullness.

Liturgy thus demands a discipline of the individual which private prayer does not. Tones of voice, bodily actions, concentration of attention — all these and many other kinds of self-dicipline — are practiced constantly. Above all, the religious must "pray when the bell rings," ceasing the job in hand, doing violence to his natural inclinations, and thus putting prayer first in his life. Only a system of group prayer or public worship — as distinguished from private and personal prayer — such as the liturgy could provide the variety, the instruction, the balance, and the discipline needed if many hours daily are to be spent in prayer as the religious is bound to do.

The worship in a chapel of religious seems strange to those who have no conception of the great sweep of liturgical prayer, or its constant change with the Fasts and Festivals of the Church Year. But those who stay at Little Portion know that nothing is accomplished in the active works of the Order except it is first of all wrought out in the workshop of prayer.

Home Work To Do

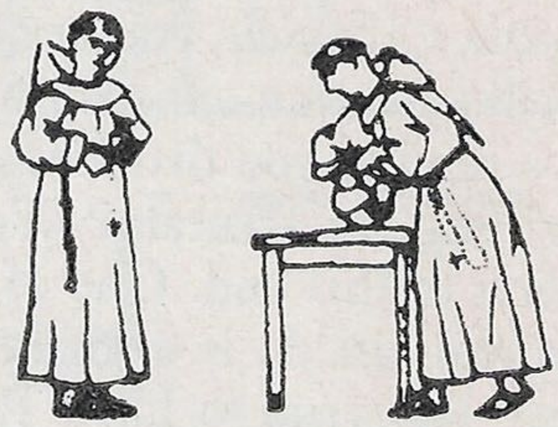
The vow of poverty means different things to different religious communities. At Little Portion we understand it to mean that we must share the hazards of the life of the poor. This necessitates that we do all our own work as far as possible.

The monastery and guest house must be kept clean, and there must be constant oversight of all such housework. Hence there is a housekeeper whose duty it is to make out cleaning schedules, and to see that the many hallways, staircases and common rooms are kept clean and neat by the friars assigned to this duty. Each religious is charged to keep his own cell in proper order and to have his bed made before the hour of the daily chapter. Those who do sacristy work must look after the altars and chapels under the direction of the sacristan.

Then there is the weekly laundry work. Clothes, towels. sheets, etc., usually around 500 pieces weekly, must be washed, dried, ironed, and stored away properly in the linen closets. Hence there is the laundry crew, and the brother vestiarian who is charged with keeping clothes in order. Consequently there is also a sewing room, where clothes are mended and habits and vestments are made.

The hardest job seems to be to keep the windows clean. There are some 220 of them. Window screens must be fitted into the proper windows in the spring and carefully taken out and stored during the winter. We make, paint and repair our own screens. Necessarily there is always repair work going on for the maintenance of the buildings at Little Portion — painting plumbing, etc. Then there are the furnaces, and other mechanical appliances, which have to be looked after.

One of the hardest and most important jobs is that of preparing and serving the meals, and this is the duty of the refectorian and his assistants. The whole community shares in the washing of dishes, but only our own trained friar-cooks pre-



pare the meals. And it is their job to see that the meals are inexpensive, that there is no waste, and that there is a sufficient variety of nourishing food. They must buy wisely of those things which Little Portion cannot supply, also store such supplies, do the canning and preserving, and with all this work, fulfil their obligations of prayer and co-operate in every way in the rest of the life and work.

Co-operation is the note of the true religious. Often men come with an ardent desire of self-consecration, but they cannot adjust themselves to this group life, to the constant demands of co-operation with others. No one can find a vocation who is unwilling to keep his temper, accept criticisms and reproof, and sometimes even a bit of injustice. In other words, a sense of proportion is needed. It is not too much to expect the same kind of team work amongst religious as the athletic field demands of football players. No priest can find a vocation at Little Portion who cannot be as much a man as a lay brother, and no layman will fit into our scheme of things who cannot reverence the priesthood for its own sake.

In order not to bore you, we will have nothing further to say about the upkeep of the house. But you will realize from this that religious have lots of home work to do.

Literary Work

St. Francis tells us in his Rule that we should have the grace of working. Any kind of work can be offered to Him as prayer. There is naturally much work of a literary nature which has to be done constantly at Little Portion. In what is said below about Little Portion Press you will find some notes on this. Our chief grind is to get out each month, if possible, the leaflet about our life and work which is known as *The Little Chronicle*. Many of you who read these lines are on our mailing list.

May we remind you that it is difficult to keep a mailing list accurate? We ask your co-operation to this end. One of the kindest things you can do is to make sure that every letter you write to Little Portion has your full proper mailing address. Furthermore, communications to the Poor Clares should never be enclosed in letters to Little Portion, and vice versa. It would also be a help if you would address the particular department which should answer your letter, for to write to one of the Fathers for something from the print shop, may mean that your letter will be received at Little Portion, only to be re-addressed to him at some distant point where he is on the mission, from which he has to re-forward your letter back to the print shop at Little Portion.

Always there are books, pamphlets, tracts, catechisms, etc., being written. But quite the most interesting literary work in progress at Little Portion while these lines are being written is the preparation of a Breviary in English. The Breviary contains the Divine Office of which we have spoken in the article telling of the Chapel as a workshop. It is a big book, an ancient book, a treasury of the devotion of all the past ages, locked up in something which prevents ordinary usage, the Latin language. For over twenty years some members of the community have been engaged in the task of preparing a complete form of the Breviary in English, in a one-volume edition, although it is ordinarily published in four.

The effort to secure the best translations of Hymns in English, to verify every single quotation of Holy Scripture which occurs in the Latin, and to translate the various directions about saying the Office in a brief and intelligible form, is a stupendous task. At the time this is being written, the final manuscript is being prepared for the printer, but it will be many many months before it is complete.

If we are succesful in answering the liturgical needs of Anglican religious communities, no amount of labour will have been too great. Undoubtedly the partial Breviaries which have already appeared in English have done much to raise the level of liturgical worship all through the Anglican Communion. Anglican hymnology, which is so justly esteemed, is very largely due to the great John Mason Neale's interest in and work on the Breviary. He might be called the Father of the English Breviary. We are trying to follow in his footsteps.

Little Portion Press and Print Shop

"This is the little portion which God has given us." So, we are told, St. Francis spoke when he and his friars established themselves at Portiuncula, near Assisi, and so the brethren of the Order of St. Francis of the Episcopal Church have named the centre of their life and work at Mount Sinai, Long Island. Such a name implies a trust to be developed for God. Hence the prayer, often prayed at Little Portion, that it may be a place of worship. conversion, and sanctification, and also the other prayer, asking for "the grace of working."

But if prayer is work, work should also be prayer. Mindful that St. Francis made a free gift to God and man of himself and his work, the Franciscan friar must fulfill the Pauline admonition to St. Timothy to be a good workman of Jesus Christ. The community at Little Portion makes a serious attempt to do all its own work in an effort to become self-supporting.

Out of the preaching of missions and retreats need arose for printing devotional cards, instructions, etc. Also there was the monthly publication of *The Little Chronicle* whereby those interested in Little Portion are kept in touch with its work and news. Through the gift of a friend, a press was procured, and through the sale of publications, the first scanty equipment is being augmented.

In Little Portion print shop on any week day you are likely to find one or more friars, scarcely out of the amateur stage as printers, laboriously setting up type by hand, or turning out from the press a tract, a catechism, or even devotional cards in colors. In the first year of its existence Little Portion Press printed thirty thousand of such cards for the Poor Clares who help support themselves by selling Christmas cards, Easter cards, etc. Those interested in such cards should write to Grace Dieu Press, Maryhill, Mount Sinai, New York, for price-lists, and not to Little Portion Press.

Hours of work in the shop are limited by the demands of prayer in the chapel and the mission work of preaching which the friars constantly carry on. Hence it suffers from constant change in the personnel of workmen as well as from lack of time and equipment. But on the whole the printing done has been of good quality, and there has also been the satisfaction of doing everything from the very start, copy, typesetting, proof-reading, printing, distribution. No reader will have any conception of how much labor this entails unless he is a printer himself.

All the friars at Little Portion, priests or laymen, work with their hands. Only those who feel a vocation to do so, are likely to be happy there. The friars must perforce be farmers, cooks, architects, builders, etc. The first Rule of St. Francis speaks of the friars as men who pray, men who preach, men who work, and at Little Portion by far their most concentrated form of preaching and work, and sometimes even of prayer, is done in this print shop which aims to serve the Christian cause by publishing the Christian message. Lists of publications and prices may be had from Little Portion Press, Mount Sinai, N. Y.

The Friars as Farmers

Goat-herding is a pleasant task for this friar

It must be confessed that the soil of Little Portion is not very fertile. When the friars first arrived it was largely overgrown with a tangle of underbrush, catbrier and poison ivy. Many weary and backbreaking hours have been spent in clearing the land. Now we have a sufficient amount under cultivation for our present needs. The next step is to build up the soil, and also to provide fruit trees of various sorts. During the summer some of the friars work almost constantly at this.

The preparation of the soil, the planting of the gardens, and their weeding and cultivation, is a task which we never quite succeed in doing well because of all the other work.

We also have three large poultry houses which supply our table with fresh eggs and sometimes with the meat of the egg-layers. Until you have tried to raise chickens, you never know what nursing and coddling they require. The friar in charge of the poultry can tell you all about vitamins, varied diet, and the absolute necessity of sunlight. You might think he was talking about human babies. Then there is the constant battle against rats, weasels, and foxes. And for that matter, the friars who do the gardening have no love for rabbits. They seem to come in droves to prey upon the succulent little vegetables.

At the moment this is being written we are trying to develop a herd of milch goats. Don't ask us why we have no cows. There is no pasturage for a cow, and by the time feed is bought, and a sanitary dairy barn with a pasteurizing unit built according to the specifications required by the State, and all these things maintained, our expense in producing the milk would be as great as what it costs to buy it. It is not quite true that goats will eat anything, for some things poison them quickly, as we know to our sorrow, but they will flourish where cows would die for lack of food. For one thing, we are expecting our herd of goats to keep down the growth of underbrush. They seem to thrive on poison ivy, of which we have an endless supply.

Experience has shown that we cannot with profit grow vegetables for canning. For the most part we are able to buy in quantities, and believe it or not, after keeping careful records we have discovered that most of the vegetables we ourselves have canned have cost more in the long run than those which we have bought. This may not always be true, but it is true at the present writing. For this reason we grow vegetables only for use in season, with the exception of those which can be stored without canning or preserving. But this is not true of fruit, and so we are anxious to enlarge our orchards.

In this connection a word ought to be said about our flower gardens and the grounds in front of the monastery, which are a matter of constant thought and work. Some times we are proud of them, sometimes ashamed. If there happens to be a long period of rainy weather, then on the first clear days all hands are obliged to work in the vegetable gardens, and front yard appearances become shameful. Order, we have discovered, must have regard to importance as well as appearance.

On the Mission

What's the use of the religious life? No use at all, says the man in the street; just a refuge for the lazy and incompetent. A thoroughly selfish life, says another, in which those who have a piety-complex spend all their time thinking about their own souls.

The preceding pages have reviewed the varied activities necessary at a place like Little Portion. But, as an anonymous letter once said, no matter how much activity you engage in for your own benefit, you still have not demonstrated that your life is worth while.

Often we have tried to picture what the life of our anonymous critic is like. His letter (we assume it was from a man) sounded as if he might be someone who is so given to self-sacrifice for humanity that he never considers himself, or his own convenience, in any matter whatsoever. He might be a man of prayer, hard work and constant self-sacrifice for others, starving himself, in a sleepless activity for humanity. But such an one would be likely to show sympathy, understanding and humility. We guess that he was a young man, fairly regular in Church attendance, honest and decent in every way, but demanding for himself the right to dress decently, to spend a certain amount of money on amusements, to pick and choose his own friends, to use his time, over and above union working hours, for seeing his best girl or his pals and for going to Church once or twice on Sunday. Such a life seems to us religious as thoroughly praiseworthy, but if the average man has a right to try to live decently and happily in the pursuit of what seems to him to be legitimate aims, the religious ought not to be charged with selfishness because he takes time to live his own life, do his own work, and say his prayers. Why is it unselfish for a man to spend time in work in order that he and his may live, if it is selfish for a religious to do the same?

The religious is part of a machine, just as the secular is. The working man may be doing something quite important for humanity by digging ditches or working in an office, but only because he is a cog in

the wheel of human life. The religious is a member of an Order which exists for the purpose of serving the highest needs of man to the glory of God. But the Order cannot fulfil its mission unless it first is able to live and develop as an Order. Every religious is a cog in the machinery of the Order which, as a whole, accomplishes a definite work. The purpose of the Order of St. Francis is to serve God and man. It professes the mixed life. Its two-fold aim is Christian worship and Christian activity.

Our Lord came to save humanity, and He gave all His followers the command to make disciples of all nations. No matter whether religious profess the contemplative, the active or the mixed life, the apostolate to souls is always their chief purpose. Nursing Sisters are interested not merely in nursing, but in carrying out our Lord's redemptive purpose for all mankind. The same is equally true with enclosed contemplatives in regard to the prayer life. Each and every religious is dedicated to the apostolate to souls, and every Order exists to further our Lord's mission of redemption. But this does not mean that each religious must preach from a pulpit. In the Order of St. Francis the friar who is preaching in a pulpit or saying Mass at the Altar is only able to do so because he is fed, clothed, kept warm, trained, directed. Back of his outward ministry there is the hidden ministry of each of his brethren who make possible what he is doing.

The side of our Order's work which is not spectacular is what we have emphasized in this book. Our mission is obvious. Both the lay brethren and priests of our Order have preached missions, given retreats and done parish work all over the United States and Canada. We often temporarily take over parishes hither and yon. We expect to continue to do so. If you do not know of this side of our work, it is because religious naturally cannot and do not advertise in the way secular organizations do. But the fact remains that the Order of Poor Brethren of St. Francis is a successful mission organization of the American Episcopal Church.

The easiest way to give an idea of our direct work for souls is to tabulate a typical twelve months of it.

Missions: eight to ten days each in the Canal Zone; Canada; New Jersey; California; Florida; Maine; and Illinois. Often these missions completely change the whole spirit and life of a parish. A missioner needs careful and long training in technique, and since the results of a mission are supernatural, a large element in its permanent utility will be the continued prayer and devotion at the monastery, by which the mission is blessed at every step of the way. Every friar at home, no matter how lowly his task may seem to the world, is preaching each mission, although often the missioner alone gets the credit. The missioner is only in the pulpit because of all the effort and prayer of the brethren in the monastery.

Retreats: two of ten days each to religious communities; ten of one day each at various places throughout the United States; four of three days each in various places; one very helpful one day's retreat for children conducted by a lay brother. These retreats demand a trained conductor, and furnish occasion for direct pastoral contact with souls. Often a diocese has a retreat for all its clergy. Most religious communities offer frequent retreats. Only since religious communities have become common in the Episcopal Church have retreats and missions become common.

Occasional ministrations: ten parishes, in the illness or absence of parish priests, cared for by the Order from periods of a week to six months each. Six weeks of intensive religious education given in one parish by lay brethren.

Permanent ministrations at the time of this writing: 1, The chaplaincy of the Poor Clares at Maryhill, which involves daily Mass, etc. 2. The mission to negroes and colored folk of Mount Sinai. 3. St. Joseph's House and St. Timothy's Church, Chicago, where three to five of our friars are constantly in residence and at work.

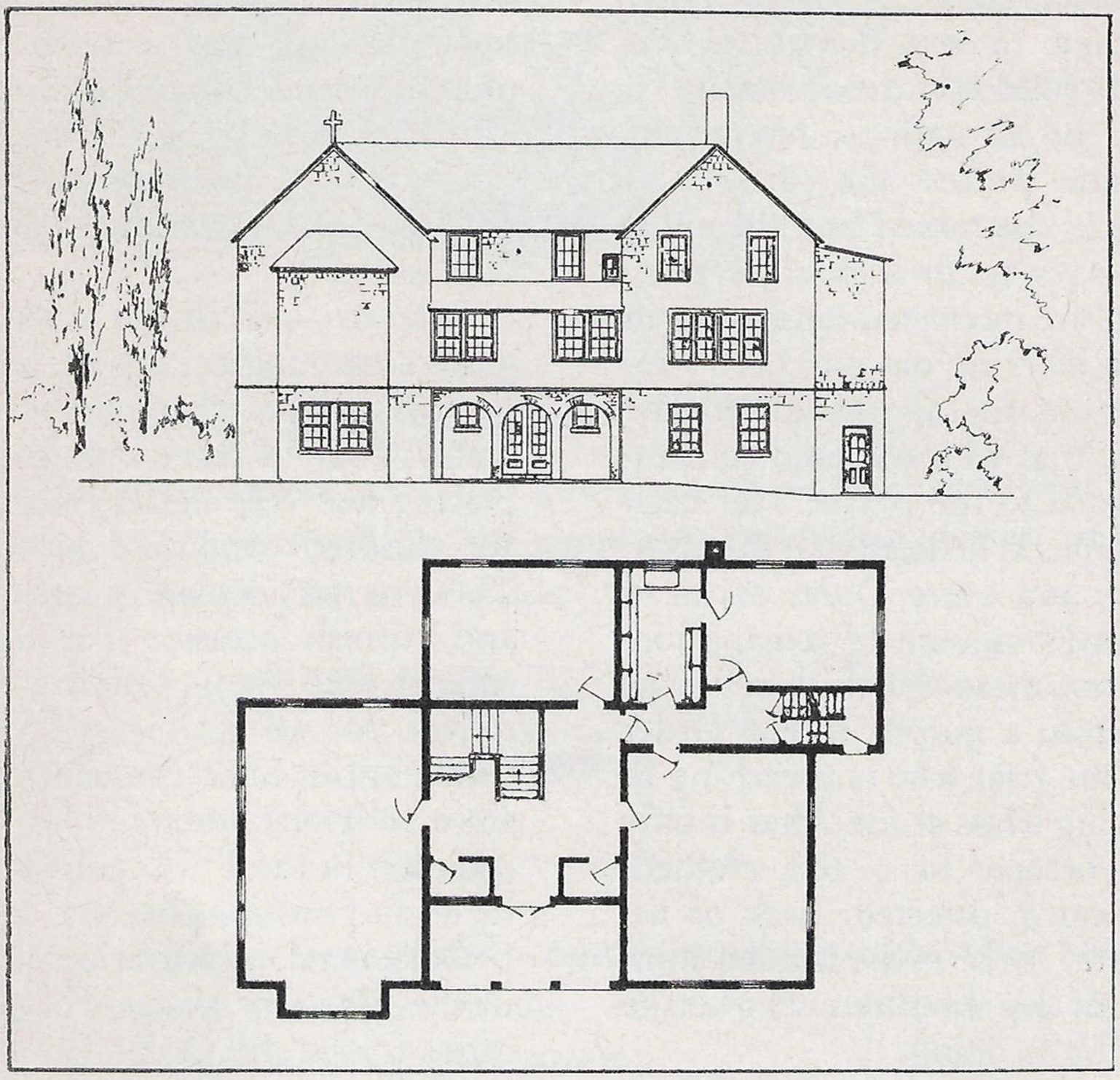
A typical happening in any religious house professing the active or mixed life: a religious is working at some job assigned to him, and in the midst of something important the superior stops him, and tells him to be ready in an hour to take a journey of a thousand miles — or it may be merely

five miles — and be absent for five months — or it may be only a day — in order to carry on the active apostolate to souls.

The few days previous to which these lines were written three priests and two lay brothers were sent out at the week end for various parish ministrations.

Each religious is on the mission to souls all the while, no matter where he is or what he is doing, and each job, no matter what it is, has that end in view. Whether he is praying, washing dishes, studying or preaching, he is doing his work to glorify God and save humanity.

The Guest House



Proposed Elevation and Plan for the House of St Francis and St. Clare.

This includes the original caretaker's cottage which grew into the first convent as shown on next page. It is complete except for the wing on the left, (common room and library) for which your help is needed.

Anyone who desires to come to Little Portion for a rest or retreat should address his inquiry to the guestmaster and not to an individual friar. The expense of maintaining the guest house is considerable, and therefore we seek from guests an offering of at least a dollar a day to cover these expenses. We can, of course, offer hospitality only to men. The Poor Clares at Maryhill, Mount Sinai, Long Island, have a guest house for women.

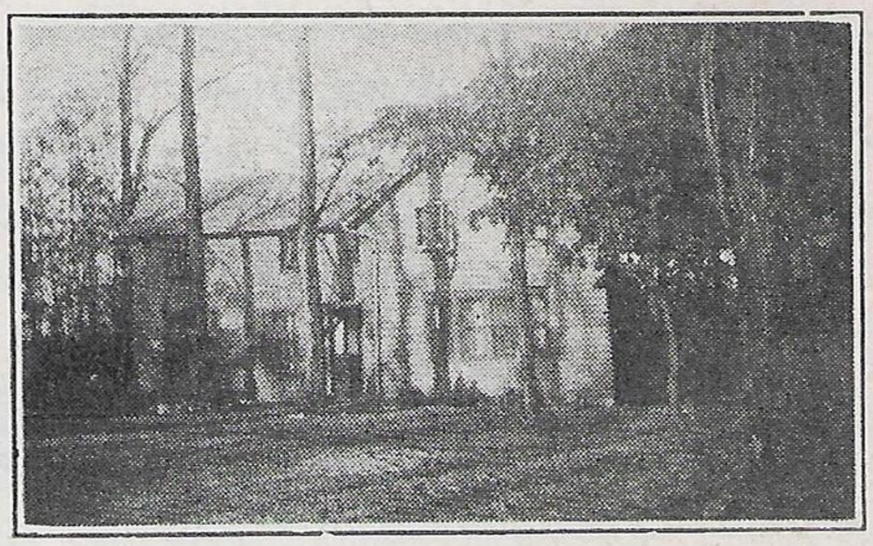
Such a guest house has certain unique things to offer, and religious desire only such guests as are seeking the particular things which religious can give them. We cannot offer amusements, or any entertainment of a worldly sort, but only decent food, quiet, the privilege of the chapel with all its services, and spiritual direction from one of the Fathers.

We have always planned a retreat house here at Little Portion. Our guest house is

too small for that purpose. Furthermore, if our community grows any more, the guest house will probably have to become the novitiate.

Our Sisters, who for a long time lived close at hand, have now vacated the old convent, and we are seeking the means to make this into a suitable retreat house. In their honour and that of our common religious Father, we have renamed it the House of St. Francis and St. Clare. If any reader would like to see this work brought to a happy conclusion, he may be sure that his assistance will be welcome. So far there seems to be little understanding of retreats amongst our lay folk in general, and consequently we do not expect to be able to develop this part of our work very rapidly. Apparently the movement must first be developed in spite of, not by virtue of, those who most need retreats. Appreciation comes only from experience.

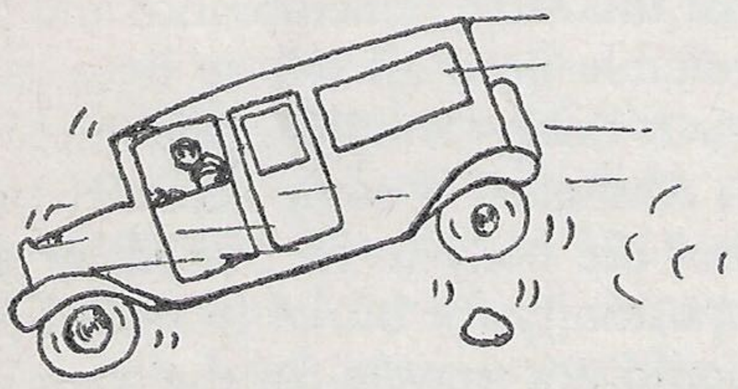
If you have never stayed at a religious house, we ask you to consider what sort of an experience it would be. Many a tired man of the world has discovered that a retreat, or even a short visit in the guest house of a religious community, is more refreshing to body and soul than the usual secular holiday. Such a visit can be the source of renewed energy and courage. For some time a young business man of New York City has so been using one week end out of every few weeks as a means of keeping himself fit for his hard work. He says it does him more good than any other holiday. After all *holiday* means *holy day*.



Caretaker's Cottage

Pilgrimages

Every summer sees certain parishes of the metropolitan area sending a group of their people to Little Portion on a pilgrimage. This is arranged by the parish priest in consultation with the superior. Usually the group arrives in the morning in time for a celebration of the Eucharist. Afterwards the pilgrims eat the picnic lunch which they have brought along with them. Then there is a tour of the monastery grounds. Eventually the whole group



breaks up into smaller ones in order to chat with individual religious, whereby the visitor gains first-hand information on any point which interests him. Sometimes a spiritual conference is held in the chapel. Usually the day closes with Benediction.

Such pilgrimages serve to introduce lay folk to a side of their own Church life with which they might never otherwise get acquainted. If you are a parish priest, what do you think might be the effect on your people if twenty or thirty of them could make a pilgrimage each year to some religious house? Might they not get a new conception of their religion as something for which great sacrifices are worth while?

In this connection, we are always being asked to explain to people how they may reach us by motor car or railroad. Our post office is Mount Sinai, Long Island, New York. Please do not spoil this address by adding Port Jefferson. If you do, the letter must first go to Port Jefferson, and from there be forwarded to us.

But although our mailing address is Mount Sinai, our express address and our railroad address is Port Jefferson. Please do not confuse this with Port Washington as many people do. Port Jefferson can be reached from the Pennsylvania Station, New York City, by taking a train on the Long Island Railroad. Usually it is neces-

sary to change trains at Jamaica. The trip takes somewhat over two hours by rail from New York City.

Motorists should inquire the way to Port Jefferson, and from there inquire the way to the Mount Sinai Post Office, and from there inquire the way to the Monastery.

If you are a motorist, you probably will not believe that these elaborate directions are necessary. But to date no one has ever arrived here by motor without much delay if he was content to accept the directions of some one on the road who claimed to know the way to the monastery.

Holy Sepulchre Chantry

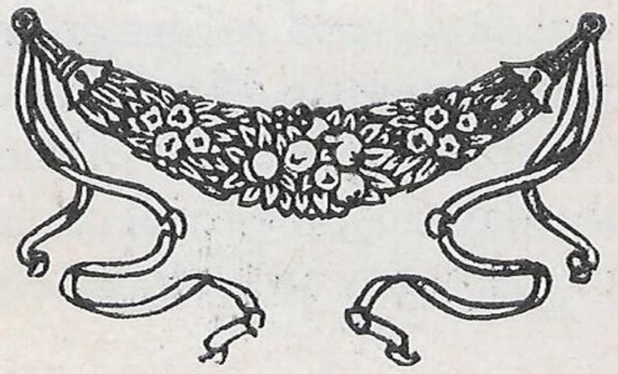
In the monastery we have a mortuary chapel known as Holy Sepulchre Chantry. We propose to keep there, in perpetual remembrance, the names of our departed benefactors and religious. We call your special attention to our Chantry Fund. It has often been suggested that the use of this Chantry be extended to all who desire to establish a permanent memorial to their dead, and at the same time assist in the permanent support of the Order. For this reason we are starting an endowment fund, the proceeds of which are to be used for the support of any of our friars who through age or infirmity are unable to do other active work than celebrating Mass. Such friars will thus be able to help support the Order by fulfilling our contract with those who have endowed the Chantry, and will be spared the humiliation of feeling that they are no longer doing anything for the Order and its friends.

We plan to commemorate in a Mass celebrated once every month in the year the name of any person put on our Chantry-book and to offer a Year's Mind Mass during the month of the year in which the person's death took place. Gifts toward the endowment of this Chantry will serve the double purpose of providing a suitable and perpetual memorial for a loved one and some sort of support for Little Portion which thereby obligates itself to the offering of the Holy Sacrifice in this Chantry unto perpetuity.

We propose to raise this endowment by gifts of fifty dollars each. If there are any of our readers who wish to make such a memorial to any of their dead, we shall be happy to assist them in this way which is also a way of their assisting us. So often money is spent on memorials which have little spiritual significance. Surely the provision of a perpetual remembrance at the Church's altars is the best possible memorial, especially in a materialistic age such as this, when so many have ceased even to believe in the life after death. Holy Sepulchre Chantry will be a perpetual memorial not only to the dead but to a belief in the resurrection of the dead.

Saint Augustine says: "So far as the burying of the body is concerned, whatever is bestowed thereon is no aid to salvation, but rather is a duty to humanity, and resulteth from that affection by which it is said that no one ever hateth his own flesh. Wherefore it is fitting that man should take whatever care he can for the flesh of his neighbor when he that bore it is departed thence; and if they that believe not in the resurrection of the flesh do this, how much more ought we that believe so to do, for such offices bestowed upon a dead body which yet shall rise again and remain unto eternity, is in some sort a testimony to our faith in the resurrection."

St. Augustine also says: "Since the faithful manifest a desire to remember their beloved dead, and to pray for them, doubt not that this same remembrance and prayer is profitable unto all whose lives merited that such things should profit them after death. And even if some necessity permitteth not the body to be buried, or giveth no opportunity for burial in sacred places, yet should not prayers for the souls of the departed be omitted."



How Little Portion Is Supported

1. We earn what we can through our missions, retreats, guest house, printing press, farming, etc.

2. We live as inexpensively as we know how by doing our own work as far as possible.

3. We depend upon God to put it into the hearts of our friends to supply our necessities when we cannot supply them ourselves.

Several benefactors — too modest to permit us to mention them by name — have given largely, and a multitude of those who cannot give largely, have given smaller sums, and so it has been going. To all these friends God will certainly give the credit and the blessing due for whatever we have accomplished.

We need men and money. Men are even harder to find than money. Any man who comes to us must have sound health of body and mind, and be humble and generous enough to permit us to train and mould him in our vocation. Stability of purpose and perservering devotion to the Order's mission, rather than emotional enthusiasm, is what is needed in a religious. Sensitive, suspicious and unhappy people can seldom adjust themselves to the religious life. It is impossible for a group of human beings anywhere to live together without friction. In religion friction can only be avoided by charity, and charity does not spring up spontaneously in the human soul. Charity must be created by a personal effort — sometimes almost heartbreaking — on the part of each religious. An opinionated, conceited or strongly selfwilled person cannot be charitable in the religious life. The other fellow is always to blame in the estimation of such a man, and being what he is, he cannot think otherwise.

As for money, we have found no way, in spite of constant and consistent efforts to do so, to finance our work without appealing for help. Doubtless if we did no active Church work we could manage to earn our living, and for this reason we have often seriously considered giving up all Church work except that which would offer us a livelihood. The mission work which we do never really pays if it is judged on the basis of American salaries. And note that the government offers no relief to religious Orders. So we are forced, as St. Francis was, into beggary.

Hence we ask of you readers who are our friends to help Little Portion in every way you can. Prayers, alms, a good word may go far in solving our problems. Above all, do not consider a small gift of no worth. If 1000 people would offer a dollar each, it is the same as though one person gave 1000 dollars. We need many constant givers of small sums. The stress of the years of depression, recession, and what not, have well - nigh broken the health and spirit of some of our friars at Little Portion whose job it has been to keep it going. If we do not answer calls for mission work on the basis of work needed, rather than on the basis of monetary return to us, we seem to be selfish. But we can only give our work to the Church when the margin between what we earn for ourselves and what we are obliged to spend in order to exist, is supplied by the alms of our friends. We have no endowments, and we do not know at this moment how the needs of the morrow are to be supplied. We trust in God for these things, and that is only another way of saying that we trust in you.

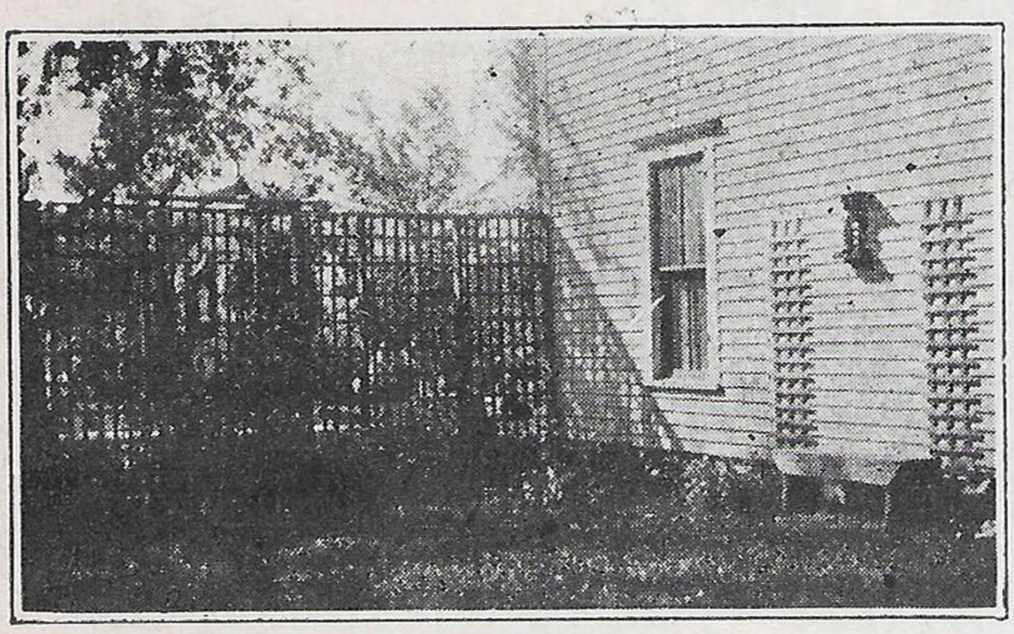
It is convenient for us if alms in the form of checks are made payable to *The Friary Alms Fund.* Money orders should read Order of St. Francis, Mount Sinai, N. Y. Sometimes money orders have been made out to Order of St. Francis, Long Island, and we have to travel 65 miles to Long Island City in order to cash them. Bequests should be left to the *Order of Poor Brethren of St. Francis of the American Congregation of Franciscans, Inc., of Mount Sinai, N. Y.*

Those who give to us may be sure of a return. You make our life and work possible, and you naturally share in every blessing which God gives us in return for anything we do for Him. Every friar offers two Masses each month for our benefactors, and you are prayed for constantly many times each day in our chapel.

Maryhill

Although this booklet deals only with Little Portion, in an effort to lead to a better understanding of our ideals, our problems and our work, it is impossible, and still less desirable, to avoid mention of those brave and dedicated women who have been our constant friends and helpers through many years, — the Poor Clares of Reparation and Adoration, now domiciled at Maryhill, Mount Sinai, Long Island.

These nuns have been given a vision beyond that of the average man and woman today. They see — what ought to be obvious and is not — that the world needs more love, more reflection, more prayer, more quiet, more resolution, not more physical activity. Christianity already has plenty of machinery. What is lacking is spiritual



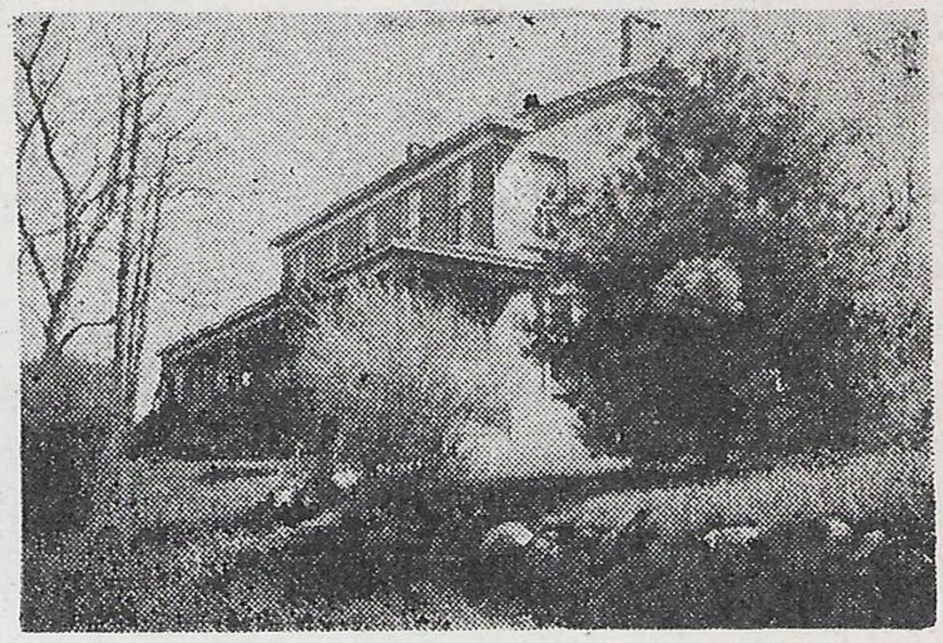
Convent Gardens at Merrill

power to run it. Therefore they have dedicated themselves to the project of founding in the American Episcopal Church an enclosed convent of nuns dedicated to prayer as their chief work. That is, their work is intensive rather than extensive.

They propse first of all to *teach themselves* how to pray. Therefore they have shut out other activities, no matter how desirable these may be, that they may concentrate on learning the great art of prayer.

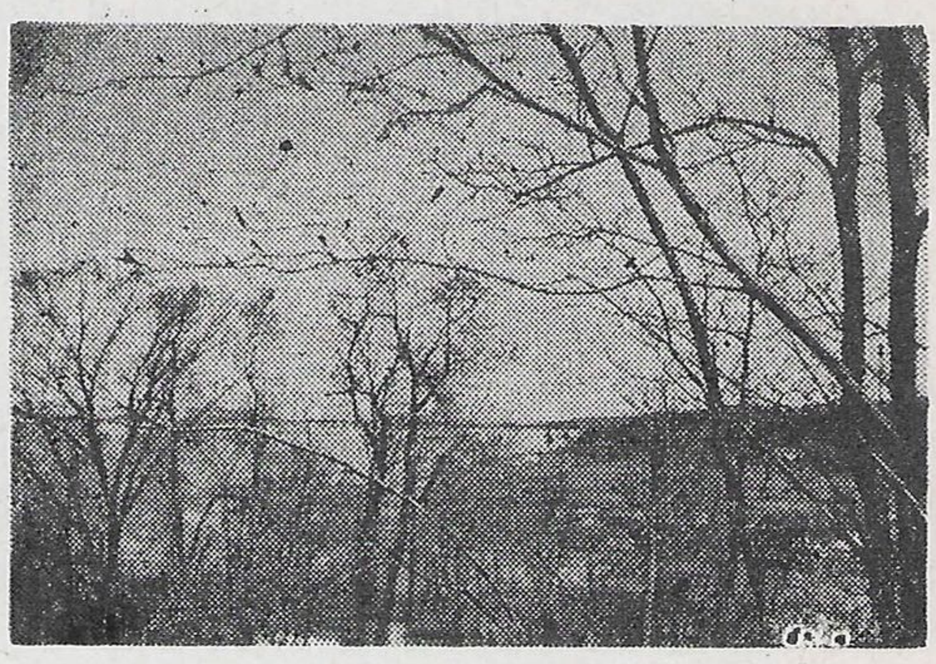
Secondly, they wish to share their knowledge and experience, so far as they can, with any others who desire to learn what they have to teach. For this reason they maintain a guest house for women who appreciate an atmosphere of prayer, quiet and devotion.

Thirdly, they wish to support themselves by their own efforts. Hence they, so far as possible, do all their own work, and in addition to taking guests, they design devotional cards for Christmas, Easter, etc., which may be had on application to the Grace Dieu Press, Maryhill, Mount Sinai, Long Island.



Guest House from Maryhill

An enclosed contemplative Order must be somewhat hidden, and at all times desires that quiet which alone can furnish the opportunity to pursue prayer as a life and work. Visitors are always welcome when they come desiring that healing of soul and invigoration of spirit which is best attained apart from the disquietude of the world and its prejudices and misconceptions.



View of the Harbor from the Convent

Communications should be addressed to the Rev. Mother, P.C. Rep., Maryhill, Mount Sinai, New York. Communications for the friars should not be addressed to the Poor Clares, nor vice versa. To do so is to delay the answer to your letter.

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